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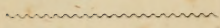


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A HISTORY  
OF  
ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY  
AND  
SACRED ART IN ITALY,  
BY  
CHARLES I. HEMANS.

...



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# CONTENTS

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I.	Primitive Pontiffs . . . . .	Pag. 4
II.	The Church in the Catacombs . . . . .	» 38
III.	The First Christian Emperors . . . . .	» 80
IV.	Christian Rome in the Fourth Century . . . . .	» 136
V.	The Fall of Empire . . . . .	» 174
VI.	The Church in the Fifth Century. . . . .	» 191
VII.	Epoch of the Gothic and Greek Wars . . . . .	» 226
VIII.	Origin of the Monastic Orders . . . . .	» 267
IX.	Saint Gregory the Great . . . . .	» 310
X.	The Monuments of Ravenna . . . . .	» 342
XI.	The Seventh Century . . . . .	» 378
XII.	The Eighth Century . . . . .	» 433
XIII.	The Ninth Century . . . . .	» 498
XIV.	Retrospect of Roman Catacombs . . . . .	» 570
	Appendix . . . . .	» 587

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## I.

### **The primitive Pontiffs.**

CHRISTIAN Rome presents no solemnities so interesting, from the historic point of view, as those for the Festival of SS. Peter and Paul, which, if somewhat too much gilded with the pomp of courts, are still a splendid symbol of the most wondrous development the world has ever beheld ; and the contrast suggested by local association , at the great basilica , is in a scene once enacted on the same site, when the imperial circus with its long arcades , spina , and obelisk , rose dim-defined in darkness luridly dispelled by fires consuming human victims — how enduring their pangs we known not , though we know for what they suffered , some clad in beasts' skins and thus exposed to be torn by dogs , others crucified naked , others made to light up by their death-fires the arena in which , among a pleasure-seeking crowd , Nero drove round in his chariot to enjoy the spectacle he had ordered as well for amusement as for policy, desiring thus to divert against an obscure sect the popular suspicions awakened by recent disaster. Such the first appearance of Christianity in Rome , after the origin of that See whose High Priest is enthroned at St. Peter's , to commemorate its foundation , on the 29th of June ! Scarce less magnificent are the next day's observances , in honour of St. Paul , at the basilica over his tomb ; and what a contrast between *his* sacred mausoleum and all that remains in formless ruin of the Caesars' sepulchres ! Nor less interesting, in their quiet character , are that day's devotions at the three lone churches remote on the Campagna, which now attract worshippers to otherwise almost deserted altars on the site

of that Apostle's martyrdom ; and where many now come to drink of the three springs ( built up within *San Paolo alle tre Fontane* ), said to have miraculously gushed forth on the spots severally touched by the Apostle's head , rebounding as it fell. No more striking example is there of inconsistency in the care and appreciation for monuments, than that presented by, on one hand, the chill and dismal decay to which is abandoned such venerable though rude architecture, almost unique among local antiquities , as *SS. Vincenzo ed Anastasio*, one of those three churches, founded in the VII century, and, on the other hand, the splendidly renovated St. Paul's, long such a drowning gulf of expenses to an impoverished exchequer. On the successive days within the octave of this festival its affecting celebrations take place on other sites where we may trace the footsteps of the two Apostles in the imperial City. At *S. Pudenziana* we may picture to ourselves the private life of St. Peter as guest of the Christian Senator Pudens in the mansion where the Apostle assembled a faithful few to worship , and where Pope Pius I, about A. D. 141 , consecrated what may be considered the original cathedral of Rome,—memorable nucleus to that church on the Viminal hill. In the dim subterranean vault of antique stonework under *S. Maria in Via Lata* , on the Corso, we may imagine St. Luke writing the « Act of the Apostles », and St. Paul dictating his Epistles to the Ephesians, the Colossians, the Philippians , and the Hebrews. At *S. Pietro in Vincoli* we may touch the two-fold chains, whose links are said to have been preternaturally united , worn at Rome and Jerusalem by him to whom that basilica is dedicated. In the Mamertine prisons we may taste of the fountain believed to have miraculously supplied water for the baptism of 47 fellow-prisoners converted by St. Peter and St. Paul ; and, instead of the silent darkness in which those consecrated dungeons are at other times left, save at the occasional early Mass, we may there attend a series of rites now attracting crowds from sunrise to sunset. At *S. Pietro in Montorio* we may turn from the glorious panorama of Rome spread beneath that Janiculan height , to admire the graceful cha-

pel built by Bramante within the Franciscan cloisters, and secure as a relic the fine red sand of that soil, beneath its circular perystyle, into which is said to have been fixed the cross of St. Peter. Lastly, at the Lateran Basilica, we may obtain a distant view of the jewelled silver busts, enshrined in the superb Gothic tabernacle over the high altar, said to contain the skulls of the two chief Apostles; and late that evening (6th July), in the same church, may witness one of those strange pageants in which the Senate of Rome plays rather a theatrical than a dignified part, in a state visit to this shrine with much hollow pomp of gold brocade, laced liveries, and military reception, in order to venerate those believed - in, but not visible, relics.

It is not merely the splendours of worship or beauty of sacred buildings, but the train of reflections suggested by these observances that renders them interesting. In witnessing the great ritual expression of the supremacy ascribed to St. Peter and his Successors, commemorative of the establishment of his episcopal throne at this centre, we are led to inquire into the origin and bounds of that time-honoured Power, and the probabilities of its future influence, its future relationships and accepted claims amid the Christian world. The time is past when mere precedent or antiquity can be accepted as the foundation that alone suffices to legitimize power; and the beneficent action of authority, its harmonious accord with man's highest interests must be required as sole title for whatever ascendancy deserves to endure. Many may see the ideal of a Christian Church in the unity through faith and worship directed to the Divine and invisible Head, as a nobler and more intimate bond than that of enforced obedience to any chief upon earth; and this seems the ideal that shines forth in pure and holy lustre from the pages of the Apostolic writings. On the other hand we have the great historic fact of the Papacy with its large claims to gratitude and reverence, its merits in fulfilment of



a high destiny, its manifest adaptation to all the requirements of the times in which its influences were most felt; the luminous virtues of so many who have filled its chair; the efficacy of its encouragements to mental movement over so many walks in which Science, Letters, and Arts progressed under its fostering care:

Realm there is none, that, if controlled or swayed  
By her commands, partakes not in degree  
Of good o'er manners, arts, and arms diffused—

as is justly observed by Wordsworth. But the powers suffered to develop into ascendancy for agencies of good in one phase of History, may not be called upon to sustain in that great drama—whether it be directed by Providence or left to its own natural evolutions under laws accomplishing not the less a providential Will—the same rank at all times, or exercise the same prerogatives in all periods alike; and as we have seen the epoch of mediaeval Christianity pass away with its distinguishing features, we may be justified in anticipation of a Christianity still more unlike that now belonging to past realities than is any existing form of this Divine Religion.

My object is to consider the history of the Church at Rome as reflected in her monuments; and the celebrations above-noticed induce inquiries into the origin and titles of several traditionally associated with the observances ordained to honour the two Apostles, co-founders of this Catholic See. The claims of *S. Pietro in Montorio* (a church built by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1500) as the site of St. Peter's Crucifixion, are supported by Baronius, but rejected by the best modern authorities (v. Platner and Urlichs), and certainly militated against by details given in the earliest written tradition of the event. Anastasius says the Apostle was buried near the place of his martyrdom, in the temple

of Apollo, near the palace of Nero on the Vatican (1); and though he moreover adds that this sepulchre was on the Aurlian Way (which would have passed near the church on the Janiculum), this mention of the « palace » (a mistake for the Circus) of Nero, corresponds with other testimony in the « Acts » of his martyrdom ascribed to Linus, where is mentioned the obelisk of Nero (2) - i. e. that on the spina of the Circus - as near the spot where St. Peter suffered; though the same document, indeed, mentions the naumachia formed by Augustus in the transtiberine quarter, in further particularizing that site. As to such inconsistencies, it is quite possible that writers regardless of archaeologic correctness should have confounded either a naumachia with a circus, or one of the ancient roads on the Janiculum with another on the Vatican Hill. It is well known that criminals were never executed within, but beyond, the walls of cities, according to ancient Roman usage; and as that church on the former hill stands in the place of the antique arx, on the steep summit comprised within the Servian walls, just at the apex of the triangle formed by those Janiculan fortifications, the inadmissibility of the tradition associating the Apostle's death with this scene is apparent. The real spot of his crucifixion we must rather look for within the same walls that now contain his magnificent tomb. Almost alike baseless are the claims of those subterranean structures in travertine, now consecrated for worship, below *S. Maria in Via Lata*; the antique edifice to which these must be ascribed being in fact the *Septa Julia*, built for the assemblies and votation of the Comitia, in the year 26 B. C, by Julius Caesar; divided into numerous chambers for the several votings to take place

(1) « Sepultus est in via Aurelia, in templo Apollinis, juxta locum ubi crucifixus est, juxta territorium triumphale » (i. e. the Triumphal Way).

(2) « Pervenit denique uno cum Apostolo populus infinitus ad locum qui appellatur naumachia, juxta obeliscum Neronis in monte

apart, and in its aggregate buildings of such vast extent as to cover the entire space from the *Piazza di Venezia* to *S. Ignazio*; therefore absorbing the site of *S. Maria* and the southern end of the Corso on which it stands. At the utmost, and on the credit of but a vague legend, the antiquity of this church does not ascend beyond the latter years of the VII, or beginning of the VIII century - its foundation ascribed to Pope Sergius I, at which period no reliance can be placed on popular traditions as to classic buildings in Rome. Other pseudo—records of the two Apostles can only be noticed in order to deplore the sanction of things that exemplify such fatal mistake as the attempt to support truth by out-works of falsehood. The reputed impress left by the head of St. Peter on the wall above the stair-case in the Mamertine prisons, is condemned by the known fact that originally no stairs were here for descent from the higher into the lower dungeon. The impression of that Apostle's knees in the church of *St. Francesca Romana* (or *S. Maria Nuova*), said to have remained where he knelt to defeat by his prayers the sorceries of Simon Magus, would indicate a giant's stature had any human knees thus marked the stone; and the other impress on stone, assumed to be that of the Saviour's feet, where. He appeared to St. Peter on the Apostle's flight along the Appian Way - the original at *S. Sebastiano*, the copy on the site of the apparition at the chapel called *Domine quo vadis* (4) - is an awkward attempt quite *unsuccessful* in art, and offensive in reference to so sublime a subject. But

(4) The Saviour (according to this legend) met St. Peter on his flight to escape from the death awaiting him at Rome. « Lord whither goest thou? » was the Apostle's demand.-- « I am going to Rome to be again crucified », the answer, which Peter took as a reprimand for his pusillanimity, and as intimation that, unless he remained to suffer, the Divine Being would assume his aspect, Himself to endure the martyrdom consequently chosen with cordial acquiescence by His representative.



we may look with unquestioning belief on those two holy shrines - the tombs of the chief Apostles, whose relics are said to have been divided between the churches on the Ostian Way and on the Vatican Hill. There is one observance at the great Basilica (on the festival of St. Peter's Chair, 18th January, also at Pentecost) when, at Vespers, the capitular clergy pass in procession from the choir-chapel to the "confessional", for the incensing of that shrine, which impresses more than almost any other among the celebrations of St. Peter's; and in the hour of twilight, with torch, and cross and stole, revealing "through incense-mists their sainted pageantry", seems in its solemn silence the grandest expression of the *religio loci* that could be conceived.

Monuments of Christian architecture, or other art, we cannot look for in the Church's earliest ages, save amid the labyrinthine mazes of catacombs; but we may associate the memory of those who died for truth with other edifices besides the Colosseum - with the subterranean cells where St. Agnes was exposed to outrage, and miraculously protected, under the church dedicate to her on the *piazza Navona*; with the bath-chamber of St. Cecilia, where she was exposed for a day and night to suffer suffocation, but reserved to die a lingering death after receiving three wounds from the headsman in the same chamber, now a consecrated chapel of the temple called by her name. A Roman lady of noble birth, she was martyred, A. D. 232, in the house of her husband Valerian, who, with his brother Tiburtius, both converted through her means, suffered by decapitation shortly before her own death. Agnes suffered also by the axe, after being thrown into the flames, which (it is said) proved innocuous to her, A. D. 303. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the sites connected with the beautiful stories of those Virgin Martyrs; and in their legends it is remarkable that, even if the supernatural be entirely rejected, still remain the elements of moral grandeur, the realities of holy triumph that might have been attained by moral powers:

the bridegroom who respected the chaste vows of Cecilia may have been won by her eloquence to appreciate her high vocation without the intervention of an angel; and the angelic guardian, the power that struck the persecutor dead in defence of the purity of Agnes, may represent the might of virtue emanating from its own sanctified shrine in the soul, to subdue or even convert licentiousness — as later legends assume that the lion, or other savage beasts, became innocuous and submissive before the martyrs exposed to be their prey!

One architectural monument there is of a primitive Christian age, complete in itself — a miniature Basilica retaining the essential features of that class of architecture, and still serving for worship, though now reduced to a crypt, under *S. Maria in Cosmedin*; long left inaccessible in consequence of an inundation of the Tiber, till cleared out, early in the last century, and restored for sacred use by the care of the learned Crescimbeni, Canon and historian of that ancient church. In a temple whose ruins seem those of a spacious and majestic edifice, Pope Dionysius (261-72) consecrated a place of Christian worship, in all probability that we still see, as to most of its details unchanged, below the tribune of the present basilica, which absorbs several marble remains of that temple; the later church having been founded by Hadrian I in the VIII, and rebuilt by Calixtus II in the XII century.

This growth of a Christian within a Pagan sanctuary, so long before the conversion of Emperors, is, indeed, a singular fact, that must have been prepared for by circumstances not yet brought into full light through historic research. We here descend into a dark subterranean, which is only lit up and officiated on the day of Lenten Stations, and find ourselves in a low crypt, 34 palms in length, 17 in width, under a flat stone roof immediately resting on the capitals of columns, the whole having an architectural character of severest simplicity, remarkable as the nucleus of so much

more than it actually presents. In the narrow nave and aisles stand six columns of granite and marble, fitted to capitals displaying the rudest form of imitative Corinthian — evidently not made for their shafts; the altar, which is modern, standing under a tiny cupola, on which are some painted heads, now nearly obliterated, though of but recent origin. On one side, at the end of an aisle, we see the stone *sedilia*; on the other, an oblong recess that may have served for a credence table; on one column, nearest the altar, to the left, the remnant of an iron rod for drawing curtains before the sacred table, according to the early usage that removed from public gaze all save particular passages in the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Around the walls are sixteen arched niches, originally serving (as Crescimbeni explains) for prayer or meditation, and in fact the height of each recess from the pavement is just sufficient to allow of kneeling with the face turned to the wall — a pious usage thus provided for in the arrangements of the sacred building, which one might wish to see retained — for the heart-devotion that naturally prefers silence and retirement.

Behind the altar of this miniature basilica, Crescimbeni discovered a small chamber, now closed, with an aperture in its roof, which he concludes to have served for letting down veils or handkerchiefs, to touch the body of some martyr, whose interment here would have completed the analogy between this primitive Christian temple and the Basilicas of later origin. A communication with the Catacombs of St. Sebastian from hence is asserted, but doubtful. On Ash-Wednesday, the sole occasion of public rites here, when holy tapers dispel the darkness, and relics are displayed in those niches, a scene singular and impressive is presented in this olden oratory; but tasteless ornaments mar its gravely simple character; and the visitor had best inspect it on some quiet day by the sole light of the custode's torch.

Under *SS. Cosmo e Damiano*, on the Forum, is another crypt belonging to a Pagan temple, used as an Oratory, about A. D. 360, by Pope Felix II – a Pope the legitimacy of whose claims in office are questionable – during his banishment under the Emperor Constans. Descending into the lower story of that church, now reduced to a subterranean in consequence of alterations made in the XVII century, we reach the ground-floor both of the Christian and the Pagan temple – the later once supposed to be a fane of Romulus and Remus, but shown by reliable antiquarians to have been dedicated to the Penates. This fane became a species of atrium to the sacred building founded by Felix IV, about A. D. 527; and from its ground-floor story we descend into a narrow low-roofed cell, like a sepulchre, where Felix II is said to have celebrated Mass and baptized, about thirty years before any public church had arisen above this vault; and where the body of Felix IV was found in 1582. We may suppose the Penates temple to have been shut and neglected, as were other Pagan fanes in this City, long before they fell into ruin. The crypt below it has a vaulting of stuccoed brick, walls partly of travertine, but in the greater part brickwork; on one side, a fragment of marble architecture, like a socle or basement with mouldings, said to have been used as an altar by that Pope; above which, in a recess, is a much-faded fresco of the Virgin and Child, apparently a work of the later Byzantine school; the actual floor being raised so high that this altar stands imbedded deep below its level. On one side is a well of spring-water with an antique marble puteal, said to have gushed miraculously, in order that Felix might here administer Baptism. Many are the sacred wells in Roman churches, whose waters the devout are eager to drink on particular festivals; and we may trace this feeling to its origin in the high idea of the baptismal rite, pre-disposing to ascribe mysterious efficacy to the pure element. Both the reputed prisons of St. Peter and St. Paul contain such wells; another, at *S. Maria in Via*, derives its sacred-



ness from a Madonna - picture found floating on it in the year 1253.

In the Benedictine church of *S. Callisto* we see, through a door beside an altar, a well of great depth and width, quite unlike those of modern formation, in which Pope Calixtus I suffered martyrdom (222), being thrown from a window of the house where he had been confined and had converted a soldier, his Keeper (1).

Above this spot arose a primitive basilica, that had fallen into ruin prior to the VIII century, when it was restored by Gregory III. The present is a small and insignificant modern building; but the festival of St. Calixtus is interesting as here celebrated with splendour by the Benedictines. Attending it on the last occasion, I heard most beautiful music at the Vespers, after which was exposed, at the altar above that well, a relic of the Martyr Pope, offered to the kisses of those who presented themselves kneeling, thus to honour it.

One other church in Rome to which attach the memories of apostolic times, is *S. Prisca* on the Aventine; the house of the Aquila and Prisca (or Priscilla) who are mentioned with affection by St Paul (*Rom.* XVI. 3) as his fellow-labourers in Christ, and who worked with him as tent-makers. Pope Eutychianus is said to have consecrated their dwelling

(1) In the adjacent church, *S. Maria in Trastevere*, is kept the stone said to have been fastened to the neck of St. Calixtus when he was drowned. Many large black stones of the species called *pietra del paragone*, rounded, but flattened at two sides, are to be seen in Roman churches, preserved as records of martyrs; and such they may be deemed, for weights of stone used to be hung to the neck, the hands, or feet, when scourging was to be inflicted. It is supposed that for this purpose were employed either weights originally serving for trade, or those some times marked with numbers to indicate what the law allowed for securing the persons of debtors. Such objects, when for trading purposes, used to be dedicated to Hercules as the God of Traffic (*Boldetti, Cimiterii dei SS. Martiri*).

into a church, A. D. 280, after it had been revealed to him where the body of St Prisca lay ; and this church , first dedicated to St. Aquila, was called by her name because containing those relics transferred hither by Eutychianus. It stands near the supposed site of the celebrated temple of Diana ; and also ( though this is but the conjecture of legend ) near a grotto where Fannus and Picus delivered oracles to Numa. Restored at different periods—in the last instance by Clement XII, -- it has now lost all characteristics of antiquity ; but the crypt below the tribune is probably of ancient date : and here we are shewn the reputed baptismal font, formed of a large Doric capital, from which St. Peter is said to have baptized Aquila, Prisca, and other converts.

The beauty of landscape and ruins, in the view enjoyed from the height where it stands, would alone be sufficient attraction to this solitary church.

Beyond the city-walls we find another example, but much plainer in description , of the Christian oratory, beneath a Pagan edifice, at *S. Urbano*, the reputed temple of Bacchus, picturesquely standing on a knoll above the valley of the *Almo* , and near the Egerian grotto. Instead of a classic temple, this interesting antique should be described as a heroum, or mausoleum of some patrician family, which was consecrated for worship in the IX century by Pope Paschal I, on account of the tradition that St. Urban I (226) used to pray and baptize in the narrow dark cell, descended into by stairs, which still contains a rude altar formed by a slab of stone laid across two supporters in masonry ; within a recess over which are paintings of the Virgin and Child, St. John the Evangelist and St Urban, in a style indicating the lowest stage, the absolute eclipse of Art-- the XI century (date of other paintings in the building above) being perhaps their period. Though restored by Urban VIII, in 1634, this church is now deprived of sacred rites, and left desolate amidst solitude, only cared for by a poor peasant-family, whose humble residence is within the same classic

walls. It is probable that the above-named crypt was not built, but merely appropriated for sacred uses by Urban, who, we know, remained long concealed in the neighbouring catacombs of St. Calixtus on the Appian way (1). We are here reminded of those retreats of the persecuted church; and the austere devotedness of a martyr-age seems to linger amid the gloom of that subterranean cell.

St. Peter is said to have transferred his Apostolic See from Antioch to Rome, A. D. 42, and to have governed the Church in the latter City for 25 years, till his martyrdom under Nero; which period in the pontificate never having been attained by any one among his 258 successors, the idea has passed into popular superstition that no Pope *can* occupy the Holy See for so long as twenty-five years. From the beginning the election to this office did not pertain to the Clergy alone, but also to the Nobility, the Army, and representatives of the Roman People, associated with the local ecclesiastical body. This system was maintained till the time of Felix II (or « third, » according to one computation), at whose election (A. D. 482) Odoacer in some manner interfered; and from this date till the time of Nicholas I (858), the Emperors of the East, the Gothic Kings, and the successors of Charlemagne severally continued to exercise a certain control over this elective procedure, though in principle such claims were set aside, in the time of Theodoric, by a Council held at Rome under Pope Symmachus (502), which annulled an ordinance issued in 483 by the Pretorian Prefect prohibiting the consecration of the Roman Bishop before reference made either to that officer, or to the Gothic Kings. An equitable judgment of Theodoric had determined, on occasion of the opposition raised by an Antipope against Sym-

(1) Gournerie (*Rome Chrétienne*) conjectures that it was in this crypt St. Urban gave instruction and baptism to Valerian, the husband of St. Cecilia; but the catacombs were more probably the scene of such rites.

machus, that he should be deemed legitimately elected who was the first chosen by a majority. From the time of Hadrian II (946) the Roman Clergy, Magnates, and People exercised the elective right independent of all interference. From the time of John XII (936), the German Emperors interposed in a direct and absolute sense, rendering the Papacy as it were a creature of their power, till the time of Stephen IX, who, though elected unanimously by the Roman voters, deemed it necessary to refer to the Empress Agnes (during the minority of Henry IV, her son), the two immediate predecessors of this Pope, Leo IX and Victor II, having owed their elevation absolutely to the Emperor Henry III. Under the ascendant influence of Hildebrand (afterwards Gregory VII) was instituted the reform in this electoral system that eventually limited it within the strict circle of ecclesiastic prerogatives, totally excluding both the aristocratic and popular element, a movement commencing with the decree of Nicholas II, in a Council held 1059, providing for the future as follows. — « On the death of the Pope, the Cardinal Bishops shall first form themselves into a council, to which the other Cardinals shall then be aggregated; they shall pay regard to the wishes of the rest of the Clergy, and of the *Roman people*. If the Roman Clergy should not comprise any subject suitable, then only will it be necessary to elect a stranger; which should in no manner preclude the respect and honour due to the future Emperor, or the confirming of the Pontific Election by him who has obtained such right of the Apostolic See ».

It is certain that, till the XI century, the Roman people took active part in this election, whatever the manner in which their suffrages were given; and though it is questionable indeed whether they ever actually voted (Moroni, *Dizionario di Erudizione Eccles.*). Odoacer required by a decree, in 476, that the King, or the Pretorian Prefect in his place, should be referred to for the legal confirmation. Teodoric, 526, directly appointed Felix III to the vacant See, by



a stretch of regal power which the Roman Clergy and Senate protested against; but the other Gothic Kings, and the Greek Emperors after them, continued to interpose in like manner during 430 years. Constantine Pogonatus (684) withdrew the right of confirmation from the Exarchs, who had long exercised it in the Emperor's name; and John V was the first to ascend the Papal throne (685) without waiting for higher civil sanction; but Justinian II revived the former claims; and the tribute of 3000 gold *solidi* continued for ages to be paid into the Byzantine treasury by each Roman Bishop. The Conclave was first established under definite rules by Gregory X at the Council of Lyons, 1274, when it was prescribed that, during the first three days of reclusion, the Cardinals should only have one dish and meals, and, after five days, be dieted on bread and water alone till they had agreed in their votes; yet, notwithstanding such enactments, during the period from 1277 to 1294 five Popes were elected without Conclave; after the death of Nicholas IV (1294) the Cardinals would not submit to reclusion, and the See remained vacant for two years; on a latter occasion for almost 29 months, after the death of Clement V, 1314. Clement VI (1351) prescribed that « none of the sacred electors, under pain of excommunication, should in any way promise (among themselves), address, or solicit other Cardinals in order to bend them to their own purposes». Celestine V (1294) revived all the rigorous prescriptions of Gregory X; and Julius II pronounced by bull (1505) that a simoniac election was invalid; a Pope raised up by such means, to be held for a heresiarch, and refused obedience by the Clergy and people.

Certainly we must give the Roman Church credit for the utmost efforts to exclude the intrusions of worldliness, and elevate into a higher sphere this transaction so important to her honour and interests. But alas for the oppositions between principle and practice! We need only consult an able recent work (the spirit of which I cannot commend)

*Histoire diplomatique des Conclaves*, by Petruccelli della Gattina, to learn from unquestionable evidence how far below the high standard proposed has been, in instances especially of the XV and XVI centuries, the actual character of those ecclesiastic comitia! At present the expenses of Conclave, for local arrangements and the maintenance of the Cardinals, are about 70,000 scudi - more or less, of course, according to the time it lasts.

It was in the XI century that the parish priests and reginary deacons of Rome, with the suffragan Bishops of the same province, acquired those privileges and legal organization as an aggregate, finally developed into the College of Cardinals, a species of ecclesiastical Senate. But it was not till the year 1179 that the special prerogative of this body as Papal Electors was conferred, and for ever assured to them, by a General Council held at the Lateran under Alexander III, when was also prescribed the requisite of two-thirds as majority for a canonical election. This limitation of the procedure to the agency of the « Sacred College » dates, indeed, from a period earlier than that Council, and was instanced at the election of Celestinus II (1143); but it was not till 1276 (time of Innocent V), that the strict organization of the Conclave, in secrecy and seclusion, came into practice as retained ever since (Cantù, *Storia Universale*). Under the Byzantine Emperors the above-named sum in gold had been exacted, first by Justinian, as price of their ratification from each new Pope; but in 682 this claim was withdrawn by Constantine IV, with reserve, however, of the right of sanction vested in the imperial crown, and requisite before the Roman Pontiff could be consecrated. At present the veto exercised by France, Spain, and Austria, through the mouth of a Cardinal, the subject of the sovereign thus interposing, is the sole check on the freedom of Papal Election.

Of the Pontiff's occupying the chair of St. Peter during the first two centuries, we know comparatively little, save what relates to their sufferings and martyrdom, or their

zeal for sacred discipline. Thirty-two, previous to the date of Constantine's conversion, including Melchiades, contemporary with that Emperor, are classed among saints, and thirty among canonized martyrs, if not all entitled to that name by voluntary death, yet all so at least through trials and afflictions sustained for faith. Linus, the first after St. Peter, of patrician family, was put to death under Vespasian, by order of the Consul Saturninus, whose daughter he is said to have liberated from demoniac possession; legends also ascribing to him such miraculous powers as to cast down idols from their pedestals by the sole breath of his mouth!

Cletus, next in order, first instituted the *Stations* in Rome's principal churches, afterwards developed with greater solemnity by St. Gregory the Great, and to this day kept up during Advent and Lent. St. Clement, the personal disciple of the Apostles, mentioned by St. Paul as among those « whose names are in the book of life », (Philippians c. IV, 3) was exiled under Trajan, for refusing to offer idolatrous sacrifice, to Pontus; there condemned to work in the metal mines with other Christian victims; and in that province so many converts were made by him that the Pagan temples became deserted, and it is said nearly seventy Christian oratories arose in the same territory; irritated at which missionary successes, the Emperor charged a Prefect to destroy that newborn church; and Clement suffered, with many others, being cast into the sea, with an anchor hung to his neck. Beautiful and significant legends mention a fountain, indicated by the apparition of a lamb, in miraculous answer to his prayer for relieving his fellow-captives in extremity of thirst during their toils in the mine (or quarry); also describing a marble temple which arose in the midst of the sea to receive his body, the waters retiring annually at the commemoration of his death, so as to allow the faithful to visit those remains, till their final transport to Rome, where they still lie in the Basilica, founded at least as early as the fourth century, over this Pontiff's house on the Coelian Hill. The dis-

covery, within late years, of the primitive, at a depth below the more modern, church of St. Clement has proved most interesting to sacred archaeology; and among the many paintings that still adorn those ancient walls, is one group in which St. Peter appears in act of placing St. Clement on the episcopal chair, and investing him with the pallium (symbol of jurisdiction), Linus and Cletus (or Anacletus) standing near, as in different relation to the Apostle — a composition which seems to justify the inference that Clement, not Linus, was the immediate successor of St. Peter; though the best authorities on ecclesiastical history agree in determining otherwise.

Clement was the first Roman Bishop, after St. Peter, who bequeathed writings that still hold their deserved place in sacred literature. A schism among the Christians at Corinth induced him to address to that community two letters, in the name of the Roman Church, the first of which is extant entire, the second only in a fragment; and at one time these epistles, both written in Greek, were by some communities admitted among the canonical Scriptures. Valuable, indeed, would be their contents did they throw any light on the claims of the Papacy, and the sense in which the primitive Christian world understood its rank among other episcopal Sees. They contain no such indications, nor any more than do the Epistles of St. Peter, even the announcement of any distinct consciousness on the part of the writer that his own high dignity had been invested with the supreme powers ascribed to it (1). Anacletus, next in order to Clement, erected the small oratory over the tomb of St. Peter, destined to expand into the most splendid of Christian temples;

(1) It would be unjust to insist too much on this negative proof. The primitive Church was naturally more occupied with doctrine than discipline, and as well in the time of the Apostles as in that of St. Clement the paramount importance of Truth, in the great battle against error, might well have been such as to throw questions of ecclesiastical polity into the shade.



also another chapel, perhaps similar, over that of St. Paul on the Ostian Way; and this Pope is said to have introduced the discipline, ever since observed, of periodical visits to Rome by Bishops - *ad limina Apostolorum* (1). The efforts of these early Pontiffs towards enhancing the sanctities of wor-

(4) There is no extant ecclesiastical edict in this sense earlier than that passed in a Roman Council by Pope Zachery, 743, ordering all bishops immediately subject to the Holy See to visit this City every year, « about the Ides of May »; but the very words of this ordinance imply a pre-existing usage or obligation. The observance was enforced through a clause inserted in the oath of fidelity to be taken by all bishops: « Apostolorum limina singulis annis aut per me, aut per certum nuncium, visitabo ». Gregory VI severely reproved the French prelates who had neglected this duty; and Sixtus V, in a bull of 1585, revived its enforcement in the strictest terms, though with some modifications of practice: all bishops of the nearer dioceses being required to visit Rome once in three years, those more remote, every four, five, or ten years, according to distances. Benedict XIV confirmed this bull under penalties of suspension, prescribing the visit every third year to Italians, every fifth to ultramontanes; also (what is still observed) that, during the sojourn, all should draw up full reports of the state of their dioceses to be submitted to the « Congregation of Council »; those holding more than one diocese, to make a separate visit and report for each; the Prefects of Missions also to send account to Rome of all religious interests within their spheres of labour every year, or every fifth year, according to the distance — and thus has originated the valuable, indeed instructive compilation known as « Annals of the Propagation of the Faith ». At present the visit « ad limina » is obligatory upon all Bishops, Vicars Apostolic, and Abbots with episcopal jurisdiction, in European countries south of the German Ocean and Baltic, every fifth year: upon those of Asia, America, and the other European Sees, every tenth year. An attestation is assigned by each at the two « patriarchal basilicas », the Vatican and Ostian, of his presence at those chief sanctuaries — the visit to the sacred « thresholds » being still maintained in form while developed into a system of such vast organisation and responsibilities.

ship, or the distinctness of expressed doctrine in formulas and ritual, may be considered a leading feature in this stage of history, manifesting not only the sense of the primitive Church, but that of their own vocation and destinies entertained by these hierarchs, perhaps with presentiment of the future *beyond* anything implied in their known edicts or actions. Cletus required that all admitted to the Eucharistic rite should receive the Communion. Evaristus (elected A. D. 100) appointed seven deacons to assist himself and his successors when preaching, as witnesses to the soundness of doctrine; and ordered that matrimony should be celebrated in public with the benediction of the Church. Alexander, decapitated (119), on the Nomentan Way (where a long-interred Basilica over his tomb was restored to light in 1834), prescribed the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist, also the mixing of water with wine, both to signify the union of Christ with his Church, and the blood mingled with water that flowed from His side on the Cross. Almost all the ritual practices ordered by Popes during these ages tend, indeed, in the same direction — to increase the solemnity or express the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice. By the same Alexander I was introduced the holy water, now placed inside (at first outside) of every church for use before worship. Sixtus I (132) ordered that none should touch the sacred vessels save priests and deacons. Iginius (154) made it a rule that no oratory should be consecrated without the Eucharistic celebration; also that sponsors, at least one of each sex, should assist at every baptism. Zephyrinus (203) prescribed that henceforth the sacramental chalice should be of no other material than gold or silver; and we read that sacred vessels of gold, and lamps in silver, were bestowed on various churches by Urban I (227) — accordant with the statement of Baronius that, even in times of persecution, silver lamps of various form, with many lights set in circlets, used to illuminate Christian ceremonies. Eusebius ordered the « corporals » (for the Eucharist) to be hence-

forth neither of woollen nor silk, but fine linen, emblematic of the grave — clothes in which the Divine Body was laid. Melchiades introduced the practice of distributing blessed bread, from the oblations made at the altar, among all those at worship who did not communicate, that at least such symbolic pledge might imply unity in faith. Callixtus, (another example of patrician birth in the elect to this See, he being of the Domitian family) founded the first *public* church in Rome, dedicate to the Blessed Virgin (now *S. Maria in Trastevere*), and once known by the title « Fons olei », from the legend that a fountain of oil had suddenly gushed on this spot, and flowed to the Tiber during a single day, shortly before the Saviour's birth, — a phenomenon naturally interpreted in the sense of Christian prophecy; and the well-known fact of the decision in favour of the Christians against the *popinari* (tavern-keepers) by the Emperor Alexander, shows that in granting this site to the former for their worship, that prince admitted their legalized position among citizens. The erection of other public temples, and the admission of a certain degree of pomp in Christian worship may be dated from this period (219-22). To Callixtus has been ascribed the first decree requiring celibacy from priests (Moroni, *Dizionario di Erudizione Eccles.*); but good authorities wave all attempt to support this; and it is observable that « the law of celibacy was not written on paper till it had begun to be effaced from the hearts of the Clergy ». (Alzog, *Histoire universelle de l'Eglise*, cap. IV, § 85). The « Apostolic Canons », admissible at least as evidence to ecclesiastical discipline during the second and third centuries, imply the obligation of the higher Clergy to remain single. The Councils of Elvira (300 or 305) and Ancyra (314) desired that those wedded before ordination should live as the unwedded; and that of Neocesarea (314) pronounced the deposition of the priest who should marry after entering the holy state. Callixtus was put to death, as above-mentioned, 226, in the house where he had been imprisoned, scourged, and left

to endure the pangs of hunger. Urban I, also of patrician family, is said to have made many converts among the higher classes, of which number were St. Cecilia, her husband Valerian, and his two brothers, all martyred. His decree providing that ecclesiastical revenues and the oblations of the faithful should only be employed for pious and charitable uses, leads us to infer the now continually increasing amount of the Church's wealth. The use of Chrism in Baptism, and the administration of Subdeacons at the altar, are also ascribed to St. Urban; and it is said that from this period the episcopal chair, now become like a regal throne, used to be called *urbanol*, as the seat of authority Divine in origin. The last-named Pontiff has become associated in art with St. Cecilia, near whom he was interred - having suffered martyrdom, 233, in the Catacombs, where she also had the honour of sepulture from his own hand. The importance of the position held by the Roman Bishopric in the III century appears on occasion of the Council held by Cornelius, 234, with assistance of sixty other bishops, for the condemnation of schism and heresy. At that Pope's election, sixteen prelates had been present, beside the Clergy and people of Rome. But his epoch is signalised by the ominous appearance of the first Antipope—the rivalry eventually such a scourge to the Church and scandal to Christian nations. A Roman priest, named Novatianus, supported by an African priest, who seems to have been the more energetic spirit in the movement, obtained illegal consecration in a private house from three rustic bishops of obscure dioceses, probably ignorant of the question at issue. Hence arose the Novatian schism, represented by a series of pretenders who kept up their claims to the Roman pontificate, with a certain factious support, for more than a century and a half—as Panvinio says, (notes to Platina) till the pontificate of Celestinus I, A. D. 422. During the persecution under Decius, Pope Cornelius is said to have caused the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul to be removed from the Catacombs, their original resting place;



the former to be re-interred near the place of his martyrdom on the Vatican, the latter in an estate of a Christian matron, Lucina, on the Ostian Way, where the great Basilica now stands over that tomb. Platina, who gives other particulars, does not mention the oratory raised by Anacletus over St. Peter's original sepulchre—its first consecration. The persecution begun under Decius numbered Cornelius among its victims, though it was under the Emperor Gallus he suffered, either in the temple of Mars on the Appian Way, whither he had been taken to sacrifice, or at Centumcellae, now Civitavecchia. Lucius suffered martyrdom after a pontificate of a few months; and his successor, Stephen I., was beheaded on his episcopal throne beside the altar, in the Catacombs of St. Sebastian 260, where that marble chair remained till its removal to Pisa in 1700, being described (by a writer who speaks as an eye-witness with stains of blood for ages left visible) Sixtus II exercised his ministry with apostolic heroism during the time of the persecution under Valerian, and suffered, with several other ecclesiastics, after refusing to sacrifice in the temple of Mars on the Appian Way.

It was when on his way to death that the memorable scene occurred between this Pontiff and the deacon Laurence, whose fate he prophesied; the latter following him in martyrdom, amid terrific pangs, after three days Dionysius, who had led the life of an eremite till his election to this See, distributed Rome into parishes, and assigned to the clergy their several posts both in the churches and cemeteries; also determining the limits of dioceses in different parts of Italy. It is said that the Emperor Aurelian referred to his decision the contest against the heretical bishop, Paul of Samosata, who had been deposed by a synod at Antioch, but had refused to yield his See to the successor chosen. Felix I ordered that the Eucharist should be celebrated over the tombs of martyrs as was already the practice, though not matter of discipline, in the Roman Church—hence the usage of insert-

ling relics in altars before their consecration. To the same Pope is ascribed the origin of anniversary festivals in honour of Martyrs, and the order that sacramental rites, save in cases of necessity, should be celebrated in sacred places alone (Platina). Cajus (related to the Emperor Diocletian) prescribed that none should be raised to episcopal rank without having passed through all the seven orders into which the Clergy were already divided. The last in this succession of martyr Popes, Marcellinus, was contemporary with the last and fiercest of Pagan persecutions against the Church, that under Diocletian, which broke out 298; and after this victim had suffered with three others, his body was left on the highway till interred by the faithful in the Catacombs of St. Prisca (4). Modern historians refute the statement of Platina, and other writers, that Marcellinus so far yielded to

(4) The language of Suetonius indicates the error so long obtaining among Romans who could not distinguish Christians from Jews, and saw in the former merely one among the sects of the latter: — *Judeos, impulsore Chris'to assidue tumultuantes, Roma expulit* — referring to the Emperor Claudius. — Tacitus thus narrates the first persecution suffered by the Church at Rome under Nero. « Quaesitis-simis poenis affectit (Nero) quos per flagitia invisos, vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat. Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Iudæam. originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque. Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum, multitudo ingens, haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis convicti sunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis coniecti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi; atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur ». And the mysteriously disseminated anticipation of a Ruler to proceed from Palestine for dominion over a new world, is attested by both those historians (Tacit. *Hist.* V. 43, Sueton, *Vita Vespas.* IV); as the same idea is expressed, with magnificent imagery, in the *Pollio* of Virgil.

the threats of the Emperor Maximianus as to throw incense on the flames of a Heathen altar. It has been said that in the sole City of Rome 47,000 Christians were put to death in the course of one month during this persecution (Foresti. *Vite de' Papi*) — which report may well be questioned: for local tradition exaggerates the number of martyrs beyond all belief, telling of 474,000 whose remains rest in the Catacombs of *S. Sebastiano*; of more than 3000 whose relics were deposited by the pious daughters of the Senator Pudens in a well at *S. Pudenziana*; and of more than 40,000 buried in the Catacombs of SS. Zeno and Anastasius below *S. Maria Scala Coeli*, one of the churches near the site of St. Paul's martyrdom. Piazza (*Emerologio Sacro*) says that 285 were put to death and interred in Catacombs near the Salarian Way, in the course of but two days, under Claudius II; and affirms that more than 2000 suffered for refusing to sacrifice before the image of the Sun. On the other hand we have the statement of Gibbon—the opposite in two extremes between which it seems just to strike the balance — that during the ten years' persecution under Diocletian, Galerius, and Maximin, the number of those put to death for the faith throughout the Empire was *probably* somewhat less than 2000, among whom about 4500 met with that fate in Palestine alone. That historian assumes that the Christians of Rome, about the middle of the third century, may have numbered about 50,000 amidst a population of at least a million, after a peace of thirty-eight years accorded to the Church under Pagan rulers; and at this period (he observes) the Roman magistrates were well aware that the Christians of this City possessed considerable wealth: « that vessels of gold and silver were used in their religious worship; and that many among their proselytes had sold their houses and lands, to increase the public riches of the sect » — as, in the previous century, the Roman Church had received, in a single donation, 200,000 sesterces from a convert of Pontus who had come to reside in this capital.

Tillemont refers the first construction of public churches for Christian worship to the period of the peace under Alex-

ander Severus; other writers, to the peace under Gallienus. There is sufficient reason to believe that before the reign of Diocletian the Faith had been preached in every province, and in all principal cities of the Empire; that episcopal government had been adopted by all the Churches scattered over the Roman world, and the institution of Synods become alike universal, long before Christianity was the religion of the State ( « *Décline and Fall* », c. xv ). It would be, indeed, erroneous to picture to ourselves the primitive Church as perpetually under a cloud of persecution and sorrow, celebrating her rites in private chambers or subterranean chapels, calumniated and assailed, or forgotten and despised. Rather have we to trace the interesting signs of her progressive credit and official recognition; the proofs that many authorities, who were far indeed from her faith, gradually opened their minds to the conviction that she had claims to respect as a firmly organized society with powers, virtues, and guarantees of enduring life.

The earliest expressions of the Pagan notion respecting Christianity in Tacitus and Suetonius, are the most hostile—a pernicious superstition inspiring with hatred against the human race, was the Religion of the Cross in the then idea of the Roman mind.

Great must have been the change in those dispositions towards it, before Alexander Severus granted the ground for a church in the Transtiberine quarter, and himself bowed before the statue of Christ, erected, with those of Abraham and Apollonius, of deified emperors and philosophers, in the private chapel where he daily offered his devotions (Lampridius *l. i. c. 29*). *Christianos esse passus est*, says Lampridius of the toleration accorded to the Church by this young prince, to whom the same writer ascribes a more active and declared friendliness towards Christian Truth, stating how he had desired to erect a temple to Christ and have Him received among the Gods, as Flavian also is said to have designed; but was prevented by those who, consulting sacred sources, obtained assurance that all would be-



come Christians, and that all other temples would be deserted, if such wish should be fulfilled » (*vita* 43). Yet the rooted Pagan prejudice again appears in the Emperor Aurelian, who, writing to the Senate at a time of anticipated warfare, reproves them for delaying to consult the Sibylline books » as if they were engaged in a church of the Christians, instead of in the temple of all the Gods » (Vopiscus, *Vita* 20). And to the time of Septimius Severus is referred the blasphemous caricature, found, a few years ago, scratched on the wall of a chamber below the Palatine, representing a crucifixion with an ass's head to the figure of the sufferer, and another figure standing by in act of saluting by kissing the hand (*Adoration* strictly so called) : the words rudely traced below in Greek, « Alexamenos worships God ».

Marcus Aurelius, in sad inconsistency with his high principles, allowed the Church to be persecuted and blames, in his writings, the constancy of the faithful in meeting death for what he deemed an obstinate opinion ! His predecessor had taken a juster view, as appears from a letter of Antoninus Pius to the provinces of Asia, reproving those who had persecuted the Christians, and injoining that none of this faith should be molested unless convicted of transgression against law (Justin Mar. *Apol.* 69).

Eusebius, followed by several other writers, states that the Emperor Philip (244-9) was a Christian ; and that he abstained from ascending the Capitol to offer sacrifice at solemn anniversaries, « through the grace and for the honour of Christ and His Church, » is what the Christian historian, Orosius, records. We possess fortunately reliable report as to what Christian rites were in these primitive ages. The very first favourable evidence from a Pagan attests their pure and beautiful simplicity ; and those remarkable words of the younger Pliny, addressed to Trajan, are at the same time witness to a transcendently important point of Christian belief : the faithful, — he had been informed by those so unhappy as to have severed themselves from that number, and become

apostate under the terror of persecution, in Asia Minor-were accustomed « to assemble on determined days at dawn of morning, to recite alternately hymns to Christ *as to God*, binding themselves by oath not to commit crimes; not to defile themselves by frauds or adulteries; not to violate trust, or deny deposits confided to them; after which they separate to convene again, in order to partake of promiscuous and innocent food ». Much more detailed and complete is the description given by Justin Martyr; and if his picture of Christian worship in the second century be indeed unlike that of the Latin Church at the present day, we must remember the inevitable law of progress; and that a religion characterised by absolute immutability in its mode of acting and appealing, would be in fact a barbaric one: « On the day of the Sun all those who inhabited towns or villages used to assemble in one place, where first were read the commentaries of the holy Apostles, or the books of the Prophets. Then, the reader having finished his task, he who presided would exhort the people with suitable words to imitate the illustrious acts of the Saints, and to follow the precepts and counsels contained in those sacred volumes. This discourse being finished, all rose at the same time, and, according to usage, prayed as well for themselves, and for those who had been just baptised, as for all others in whatsoever country, that, having acquired the knowledge of the truth, they might also attain the grace of leading a life sanctified by good works, observing the commandments of the Lord, and finally arriving at the glory which has no end. They then saluted each other with a kiss, the sign of brotherly affection. Afterwards were offered to him who presided bread and wine with water, having received which things, he gave glory and praise to the Father through the Son and through the Holy Spirit, and continued for some time in the rendering of thanks for these gifts from Him received. These prayers being finished, the people who assisted would answer *amen*; and after the supplications and acclamations of the faithful, the deacons

took the bread and wine and water, over which had been rendered thanks to the Lord, and distributed them to those present, reserving a part for those who had not been able to intervene at the celebration. Now, this divine food was at that time called the Eucharist, of which assuredly none could partake save those who believed that the doctrines of our religion were most true; who had been baptised, and who had lived in such manner as was commanded by the Redeemer; for indeed all were persuaded, as we are likewise, that that nourishment ought not to be taken as one eats of bread and drinks of wine commonly, but as most sacred food, seeing that it had been revealed to us that such nourishment is indeed the flesh and blood of Christ Jesus. For the Apostles, in their commentaries, which are called Gospels, have written that thus it was commanded to them by the Redeemer, at the time when, having taken bread, after rendering thanks, he said, *do this in remembrance of me: this is my body*; and having taken the cup and given thanks, added also, – *this is my blood*. It was on the Sunday that they assembled, both because this day was the first in the creation of the world, and because on the same had risen from the dead the Son of God, our Saviour, Christ Jesus.

As to the personality of the Roman Bishops, it would be vain to look for even a nucleus of the pomp of circumstance that eventually surrounded them, in these earliest ages; even the great fact of the gradually-attained supremacy over the Catholic world, as held by Rome, scarcely yet appears in its incipient stage. We may picture to ourselves these saintly Pastors, so many of whom shed their blood for the faith, officiating at plain wooden altars, or over the tombs of Martyrs in Catacombs, undistinguished in garb or ceremonial from their clergy, clad in the usual dignified costume of the Roman citizen, which had not yet received adjuncts of symbolic ornament, except perhaps a fillet (*infula*) round the head (origin of the later mitre), and the staff, emblem

of the pastoral office, in the hand <sup>1)</sup>. Not many of these ancient Pontiffs have become conspicuous figures in Art., except St. Clement, whose symbol is the anchor (fastened to his neck when he suffered by drowning), and sometimes the mitre, or a triple cross; St. Callixtus, with a great stone tied to his neck, or springs of water near him; and St. Cornelius, with a horn of unction and a triple cross. St. Anacletus is introduced by Raphael in the « Disputa », or « Theology » as his grand picture should rather be called, with the palm in his hand; and St. Urban is seen scourged at a stake, or beheaded, whilst an idol falls from a broken column near (Hu-enbeth, « Emblems of Saints ») St. Alexander, in a statue by Amadori lately erected in a niche of the Porta Pia, holds a stylus in one hand, and in the other a scroll with the words *qui praebe quem pataretur*, a vase being at his feet, on which is inscribed *asperges me*, allusive to his additions to the liturgy and the use of holy water originated by him.

One important feature of this period is that transition from the primitive to the more developed church-government, which of course was gradual, though early accomplished, admitting more and more the principle of subordination, but still retaining much of the democratic element, and allowing the interposition of the people in religious interests — a curious evidence to which is found in the Pagan biographer above cited: Alexander Severus (he tells us) desired that provincial magistrates, or procurators,

(1) Cardinal Wiseman (*Fabio's* c. X) states that, when officiating, a distinctive vestment of pure white was worn over those in common use by Prelates; and the ample *chasuble* has succeeded to this in the ecclesiastic costume of the present day.

On the same high authority I rest the detail of the *infula*, worn like a diadem round the head; but may add that the absence of everything like this in pontifical costume, represented so often, and from different periods, among the earliest Christian mosaics at Rome, seems almost conclusive against this particular.



should be liable to censure by popular accusation, in case any had to charge them with crimes, and that proof should be brought against them by the accuser; deeming it grievous that what was done by Christians and Jews, in publishing (*predicandis* the names of priests to be obtained, should not be done in regard to the rulers of provinces, to whom the fortunes and lives of men were entrusted. (Lampridius, *vita*, 45). In these three centuries of religious struggle the silent triumphs effected by Truth against all the might of worldly interests—prejudice, corruption, and violence, afford an impressive spectacle of principles gradually overmastering, by innate virtues, the entire moral world beneath their divine influence. If still but an under-current, the Christian idea is found diffusing itself over regions of intellect, giving birth to aspirations or sentiments, which find utterance in a new philosophy, and stamp their character on works of thought and imagination. Hence appears a new era both in Latin and Greek literature; a vague restless speculation directed to the invisible world, a consciousness of Deity, a craving for religious knowledge, a more distinct conviction of immortality begin to express themselves. In such writers as Apuleius, Macrobius, Marcus Aurelius, and, among the Greeks, Epictetus and Aristides, we recognise this new movement; but above all in Seneca do we find the accordance with Christian ethics and ideas, apart from the acceptance of doctrine; the elevating sense of an omniscient Power, the conviction that man's true liberty and only real happiness are to be attained through virtue and the knowledge of God. This phase in the story of mind has been well illustrated in such works as Champigny's « *Les Antonins* », and Dr. Newman's « *Development of Christian Doctrine* »; also in another, perhaps less known to English readers, by a living Italian writer of much thought and learning, Count Tullio Dandolo, from whose remarks in regard to the epoch here considered I translate the following with reference to the state of Empire under Hadrian and his immediate successors. — « The vast

and speculative mind of Hadrian was sufficiently informed to comprehend all the importance of the religious novelties now diffusing themselves; nevertheless he either could not or would not suspect the reality, and by the apotheosis of Antinous dissipated the last illusions [of popular veneration for a worship irreparably fallen into the mire. Certainly the progress of Christianity could not have failed to strike that deeply-investigating spirit: he had not refused to examine apologies for it, addressed to him by Quadratus and Aristides; and the rescript he directed to the proconsul of Asia Minor accorded to the Christians, for protection against outbursts of popular fury, the same guarantees as those Trajan desired to concede to them against informants. Nor did the mild disposition of the first Antoninus cause any change to the auspicious circumstances in which the Christians were placed under the successor of Hadrian; rather did their religion now acquire a still more public character, whilst the apologies, from time to time appearing, began boldly to assail the immorality and absurdities of polytheism. Marcus Aurelius may be considered as the last effort of Paganism, or, we should rather say, of Pagan philosophy, to place a worthy opponent in the ranks against the invasion of Christianity. That imperial Stoic rivalled the austerity of the Christians in his contempt for pomps and pleasures. How came it then that the Gospel found in him an intolerant and violent persecutor? Three causes unitedly availed to make him so dissimilar in this to what he was by nature in other undertakings: firstly, the change in the relative position of Christianity and Polytheism; secondly, the special circumstances of the times; thirdly, certain personal, and, we may say, exceptional qualities in his individuality; and yet in this Emperor's character we observe a progress extraneous to the Stoic virtue, to be explained by an influence of which he could not render account to himself, but which reveals itself to our eyes with splendid distinctness. The evangelic dogmas were at that age combated, but ill comprehended;

the prejudices of Roman pride and philosophic vanity did not consent even to give time to the examining of a religion founded by a Hebrew, who had perished on the cross, and promulgated by men of abject condition; yet, thanks to such promulgation, the virtues properly Christian had commenced an efficacious and ever increasing, although tacit and imperceptible, action. Strange aberrations of the worthiest intellects! Marcus Aurelius reproached the Christians for their eagerness to die: judge and victims professing similar doctrines! Glancing over the writings of this Emperor, we might suppose we were reading Christian meditations, so great the love of virtue, so profound the contempt for pleasure there manifest! On the shores of the Tiber, in that palace of marble and gold, reared by Nero and purified by Aurelius, is a solitary chamber where, far from the courtier throng, did the arbiter over the destiny of a hundred millions reflect and write concerning his individual duties—his hand tracing the same maxims which an obscure Christian was preaching in the Catacombs, or in prison. Through political prejudice and the tyranny of fanaticism, truths from opposite extremities of the world encountered, without recognising, each other; in fact, enlightened Pagans of the third century were infinitely removed, as to points of belief, from the Greeks and Romans of five centuries anterior; and if ceremonies were still performed after the fashion of their aucestors, and with scarce dissimilar apparatus, they were now but intended to adumbrate a species of speculative deism. A new and reawakening piety, generating in its delusions an offspring of aberrations hitherto unknown, co-operated with the transformed philosophy to extinguish the ancient and create a new religion. — *Neoplatonism*, transmuted from a philosophic sect into a religious system since the day when it had begun appropriating to itself those theurgic elements contained in the Oriental doctrines deemed harmonious with its system. It was a compound of extravagance and good faith, of rashness and seriousness, of shadows and

lights ; but presently was created by it a literature all its own : the *Apollonius* of Philostratus being its *Odyssey* ; the *Pythagoras* of Jamblichus its *Cyropoedia*, and the *Enneadis* of Plotinus its universal manual » — (*Il Cristianesimo Nascente*).

Besides the sacred buildings above-described, there is one other in Rome, which, though it cannot indeed be called a monument of these early ages, is yet connected with their history : *S. Pudenziana* on the Viminal Hill, beneath whose aisles are remains of a residence where the worship of the primitive Church was celebrated, being identified as the house of that Senator Pudens, who entertained St. Peter, and to whose daughter this church is dedicate. Researches undertaken here in the winter of 1865 by Mr J. H. Parker (a gentleman well known for archaeologic learning<sup>1</sup>), rendered accessible the subterraneans known to exist, but long left unexplored, where we recognise the antique structure of the Imperial period. Public baths, called after Novatus, that senator's son, within this mansion, are supposed to have continued in use for some centuries later ; and we read in Baronius that, in his time, considerable ruins stood on this spot ; mentioned also by Piazza (*Sacre Stazioni*) as still conspicuous when he wrote, towards the end of the XVII century. It is probable that a chamber in these baths was the one consecrated by Pius I, about A. D. 145, in deference to the request of Praxedis, another daughter of Pudens, who survived till that date ; and anciently two churches, known as *Titulus Pudentis* and *Titulus Pastoris*, the latter dedicated to Pastor, a brother of the same Pope Pius, are said to have occupied this site.

These oratories (as they might be called in respect to size) were subsequently thrown together into a single basilica, rebuilt first by Adrian I, in the eighth century, afterwards by Gregory VII, and by Innocent II. In its present state, as tastelessly modernized in 1597, little of the ancient architecture remains except columns of *bigio* marble, built up into heavy square pilasters along the nave, and flanking



the portal ; besides some plain mosaic pavement. But we recognise an early Christian period in the low reliefs on the lintel of the doorway , representing in bust SS. Pudentiana , Praxedis , and two others , probably SS. Pudens and Pastor ; the divine Lamb , with a cross , in the centre , and a graceful foliate ornament along the interstices. The square campanile of brickwork (date probably about 4130) presents one of the finest specimens of its description in Rome , with stories of triple arcades , bands of terracotta cornice-moulding , inlaid disks and crosses in coloured stone. Reduced as the actual church is , by modern works , to a level with other uninteresting structures of the sixteenth century , we may still trace the original plan dividing it into two sanctuaries ; the larger corresponding to the present chancel , and perhaps also to the nave ; the smaller represented by a lateral chapel and narrow aisle , once the *titulis Pudentis* , in which a council was held under Pope Symmachus , and where we see pavement of primitive mosaic , white and gray marble intermixed with porphyry and serpentine. In the same chapel is kept the most revered relic , said to be a part of the wooden altar on which St. Peter here celebrated (1) ; and a tablet here records the local primitive memories , as more fully given in another very curious inscription , Latin and Italian , to be read in the nave (2). One artistic treasure , of high

(1) The greater part of this is enclosed within the high altar of the Lateran. It is said that , till the time of St. Sylvester , all the Popes used to celebrate on this sacred table.

(2) « In this church , more ancient than any other in Rome , formerly the house of Pudens , a senator , father of SS. Novatus , Timotheus , and the virgin saints Pudentiana and Praxedis , was the first residence of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Here those who became Christians assembled to attend mass and receive holy communion : here are buried the bodies of 3000 martyrs , and an immense quantity of martyrs' blood is collected. Those who visit this church every day obtain an indulgence of 3000 years , with remis-

antiquity, still fortunately left in its place, is the mosaic of the apse, referred by Italian writers to the year 884, by Germans (v. *Beschreibung Roms*), supposed to be that ordered by Adrian I in the eighth century; — at all events, a work of such merit that Poussin esteemed it the first among ancient Christian mosaics; and De Rossi, in his « *Roma Cristiana* », agrees as to its high claims.

Leaving this church, to observe its external structure, we see, from a narrow court on one side, the most curious portion, perhaps of the second century of our era, recognisable in a lateral wall of Roman brickwork, pierced by high arched windows (now built up), and supported by constructive arches, the square stone blocks here set into the brickwork, a method practised under Constantine, indicating the period of that emperor. Near one angle of these walls, we may enter through a gap to descend into the subterraneans, now in great part filled with soil, over different levels of which we must pursue an uneasy path; first, through a long hall with stucco-covered vault, probably the nave of the primitive church; thence into vaulted chambers with walls and roof alike stuccoed, in some parts painted in plain red bands that follow the lines of archways; elsewhere in more decorative style, with architectural subjects, reminding us of the Pompeian.

In one chamber is a fireplace with aperture now closed; and in another, same pavement in black and white mosaic,

sion of the third part of their sins ». Cardinal Wiseman (good authority as to the church from which he took his title in the Sacred College), assumes (*Fabola*, ch. x) that S. Pudenziana was the principal place of Christian worship in Rome from the apostolic age; and that Pius I only added another oratory, but did not *first* consecrate the house of that Pudens mentioned by St. Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy, and said to have suffered a martyr's death under Nero. His two daughters are represented, in the reliefs over the portal, with large vases in their hands, significant of their care in collecting the blood of such witnesses to faith.

without design, laid bare by the removal of soil. It seems probable that these interiors belong to the baths, in which, perhaps without sacrifice of antique buildings, was formed that primitive church long left to oblivion; and these subterraneas were once profaned for evil purposes, as in the time of Raffaello, when they were ordered to be filled up with soil, on account of their having become a haunt of brigands! This, the supposed primitive cathedral of the Papal metropolis, now affords a striking example of the negligence, amidst much ostentatious church-restoration, to be charged against Rome's authorities in respect to the less noted, however venerable, monuments of Christian antiquity (4).

(4) For the lives of the primitive Popes, see Anastasius, with his commentators, edition published at Rome under Benedict XIV; Platina. Ciaconius, the *Art de vérifier les Dates*, the *Perfetto Leggendario*, the *Dizionario* of Moroni, the *Roma Sotterranea* of De Rossi; and Petrarch's work on this subject, of no authority indeed, but curious as showing the ideas of his time. For the development of doctrine and its definitions in these ages, — Dupin, *Auteurs Ecclesiastiques*, Alzog, Döllinger: De Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire Rom. au IVme siècle*.

## II.

### **The Church in the Catacombs.**

NO phase of Christian Antiquity speaks so little to the eye, and yet none is so full of significance for the mind, nor so important to high interests, as the Art found in Rome's Catacombs — the pictorial and sculptured evidence to the life of the primitive Church, supplying illustrations of inestimable value, and pleading with silent eloquence for much that has been laid aside, while opposed to much that has been adopted in ecclesiastical usage. Here is indeed manifest, to the thoughtful observer, an ideal far from consistently conformed to, at the present day, by any religious system, Catholic or Protestant; for the conviction that the true manifestation of the perfectly Evangelic Church is yet to be looked for as future, and that all Institutions hitherto pretending to that character are destined eventually to give place to a reality nobler and purer, as the morning star fades before the lustre of the risen sun, — *this* is what forces itself most strongly upon minds capable of bringing impartial judgment and independent reason to the study of such monuments. Lately exerted activity in the research and illustration of the records of ancient Christianity at Rome — fresh impulses given to learning and speculation in this sphere, and favoured by the liberal patronage of Pius IX — tend, perhaps without the consciousness of those immediately concerned, to prepare for a new era in Faith and Devotion, whose spirit will probably prove adverse, in various respects.



to the teaching or practice, if not irreconcilable with the now admitted claims of Rome in the hierarchic order. That all which is holy, useful, morally beautiful, and adapted to Humanity's requirements in that ably-organized system of Church—government, whose triumphant successes are due to the talents and zeal exerted at this centre, and long assuredly favoured by Providence, with ever-renewed proof how invariably

—the way is smooth  
For Power that travels with the human heart—

that all *this* may, as to essence at least, be retained in the final developments of Divine Religion, none can more earnestly desire or hope than those who look with full confidence for a more perfect acceptance and embodiment in the future of the Truth taught by the World's Redeemer.

We have to observe the deeper significance attaching to this term *Catacomb* than to any by which places of sepulture were known to Paganism, from the Greek to *lull or fall asleep*: also to the phrase common to epitaphs above Christian graves, *depositus* (« interred »), implying *consignment*, the temporary trust of a treasure to the tomb, in hope of another life — with sense utterly wanting to the funereal terms *conditus*, *compositus*, and others of Pagan use. The records these cemeteries contain cannot be appreciated from any sectarian point of view; but alike command interest from all Christians by their luminous and paramount testimony to those Divine Truths in respect to which the followers of Christ are universally agreed, — here far more strikingly manifest than is aught that bears evidence to dogmas or practices around which discords have arisen for results of disunion among those who acknowledge the same Divine Author of their Faith. It is a noble presentment of one momentous phase in the story of Humanity that these sacred Antiquities afford to us. — Amidst circumstances of unexampled trial, amidst all the provocations of calumny, persecution, the

liabilities to degrading punishment and torturing death, while the Christians were accused of atheism, considered to be, (as Tacitus says), convicted of hatred against the human race, not one expression of bitter or vindictive feeling, not one utterance of the sorrow that is without hope can be read upon these monumental pages—but, on the contrary, the intelligible language of an elevated spirit and calmly cheerful temper, hope whose flame never burns dim, faith serenely stedfast, a devotional practice fraught with sublime mysticism, yet distinguished by simplicity and repose—together a moral picture evincing what is truly Godlike in Man!

At a glance we may go through the entire range of scriptural, and almost as rapidly through that of symbolic subjects in this artistic sphere, both circles obviously determined by traditions from which the imaginative faculty was slow to emancipate itself. From the Old Testament: — the Fall of Adam and Eve, and the judgment pronounced on them before their expulsion from Paradise; Noah in the ark; the Sacrifice of Abraham; Moses receiving the tables of the Law on Sinai; Moses striking the Rock; the story of Jonas in different stages; Daniel in the Lions' Den; the three Israelites in the fiery Furnace; the Ascent of Elias to Heaven, and a few others less common—from the New Testament: the Nativity; the Adoration of the Magi; the Change of Water into Wine; the Multiplication of loaves; the restoring of sight to the Blind; the healing of the Cripple, and of the Woman afflicted with a bloody flux; the Raising of Lazarus; Christ entering Jerusalem, seated on an ass; St. Peter denying Christ, between two Jews; the arrest of St. Peter; Pilate washing his hands; in one instance (on a sarcophagus) the soldiers crowning Our Lord in mockery, but (remarkable for the sentiment—the preference for the triumphant rather than mournful aspect) a garland of *flowers* being substituted for that thorny crown mentioned in the Gospel narrative; in another instance, the Roman soldiers striking the Divine Sufferer on the head with a reed; but no nearer approach

to the dread consummation being ever attempted—a reserve imposed no doubt by reverential tenderness, or the fear of betraying to scorn the great object of faith respecting that supreme sacrifice accomplished on Calvary. Among other subjects, prominent in the IV century, (though not for the first time then seen), are two persons whose high position in devotional regards henceforth becomes more and more conspicuous with the lapse of ages—the Blessed Virgin and St. Peter. The mother of Christ, as first introduced to us by Art, is only seen in her historic relation to her Divine Son, nor in any other than the two scenes of the Nativity and Adoration of the Wise Men—later she appears like other of those *orantes*, or figures in the attitude of prayer, and sometimes between the Apostles Peter and Paul—occasionally, indeed, with naïve expression of reverence, on larger scale than these latter—an honour, however, not *exclusively* hers, but also given to certain other Virgin Saints, especially St. Agnes. The first example of the « Madonna and Child » picture destined for such endless reproduction and extraordinary honours, is seen over a tomb in the Catacombs of St. Agnes—Mary with veiled head, arms extended in prayer, and the Child, not apparently seated, but *standing* before her, on each side being the monogram of the Holy Name, XP—which symbol (rarely in use before the conversion of Constantine) suffices to show that this picture cannot be of earlier date than the IV century—as the absence of the nimbus, to the heads both of Mother and Child, indicates origin not later than the earlier years of the next century, before which that attribute scarcely appears in Christian Art. An event in ecclesiastical History explains how this pictorial subject, the Madonna and Child, attained its high importance and popularity—became in fact a symbol of orthodoxy, displayed in private houses, painted on furniture, and embroidered on garments. It was in the year 431 that the Council of Ephesus, in denouncing the adverse opinions of Nestorius, defined that Mary was not merely the Mother of Humanity, but to

be revered in a more exalted sense as the Mother of Deity in Christ.

Turning to the purely symbolic, we find most frequently introduced—the Lamb (later appearing with the nimbus round its head) and the various other forms in which Faith contemplated the Redeemer—namely, the Good Shepherd, Orpheus charming wild animals with his lyre; the Vine; the Olive; the Rock; a Light; a Column; a Fountain; a Lion; and we may read seven poetic lines by St. Damasus enumerating all the titles or symbols referring to the same Divine Personality—comprising, besides the above, a King, a Giant, a Gem, a Gate, a Rod, a Hand, a House, a Net, a Vineyard. But, among all others, the symbol most frequently seen is the *fish*, with a meaning perhaps generally known, but too important to be here omitted—its corresponding term in Greek, being formed of the initial letters of the holy name and title, « Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour ». We find also the Dove for the Holy Spirit, or for beatified spirits generally; the Stag, for the desire after Baptism and heavenly truth; Candelabra for illumination through the Gospel; a Ship for the Church, sometimes represented sailing near a lighthouse, to signify the Church guided by the source of all light and truth; a Fish swimming with a basket of bread on its back, for the Eucharistic Sacrament; the Horse for eagerness, or speed, in embracing Divine doctrine; the Lion, for martyr-fortitude, or vigilance against the snares of sin (as well as with that higher allusion above noticed); the Peacock, for immortality; the Phoenix, for the Resurrection; the Hare for persecution, or the perils to which the faithful must be exposed; the Cock for vigilance—the Fox being taken in negative sense of warning against astuteness and pride, as the Dove (besides its other meanings) reminded of the simplicity becoming to believers. Certain trees also appear in the same mystic order: the Cypress and the Pine for death; the Palm for victory; the Olive for the fruit of good works, the lustre of virtue, mercy, purity, or peace; the Vine, not only for the Eucharist



and the Person of the Lord, but also for the ineffable union of the faithful in and with His Divinity; the lamp in the sepulchre implies both the righteous man and the true Light of the world; the House represents either the sepulchre, or the mortal tenement we inhabit in life; and the Anchor is taken not only in the sense understood by Paganism, but also for constancy and fortitude, or as indicating the Cross. Another less intelligible object, the wine-barrel, is supposed to imply concord, or the union of the faithful, bound together by sacred ties, as that vessel's staves are by its hoops. The lyre, sometimes in the hand of its master, Orpheus, is a beautiful symbol for the harmony and mansuetude produced by the subjection of evil passions through the divinely potent action of Truth. The Four Seasons appear with higher allusion than could be apprehended by the Gentiles—Winter representing the present life of storms and troubles; Spring, the renovation of the soul and resuscitation of the body; Summer, the glow of love towards God; and Autumn, the death by Martyrdom, or life's glorious close after conflict, in anticipation of « the bright spring-dawn of Heaven's eternal year ».

In order to understand such a subject as the Eucharist, in its supreme place as presented by this primitive Art, we must endeavour to realize what this ordinance was to the early Christians — the centre, and (it seems) daily recurring transaction of their worship — the keystone of the mystic arch on which their whole devotional system may be said to have rested. On every side appears evident the desire at once to convey its meanings through symbolism to the faithful, and to conceal both its dogma and celebration from the knowledge of unbelievers: never introduced with *direct* representation either of its institution or ritual, but repeatedly in presentment for the enlightened eye through a peculiar selection of types — as by the fish placed, together with loaves marked with a cross, on a table — or (still more significant) the fish floating in water with a basket containing bread and a small vessel of wine on its back — thus representing at once what

I might describe in the words of the Anglican Catechism. « the outward and visible, sign » *and* « the inward part or thing signified » — the Elements of the Eucharist with the very person of the Redeemer. Another naively expressive symbol, less intelligible at first sight, is the pail of milk, designed to signify the celestial food prepared by the Good Shepherd for his flock: this mystic sense sometimes made more clear by the nimbus within which the pail is seen; or by its being placed on a rude altar, beside which is the pastoral staff, without the figure of the Shepherd, who is elsewhere seen carrying this vessel; the Lamb also being sometimes represented with the pail on its back. A symbolic picture of the Eucharist in the form of fish and bread, at the Callixtan Catacombs, is referrible beyond doubt to antiquity as early as the first half of the third century; and a similar one in those of S. Lucina is assumed to be not more modern than the second century — perhaps of even earlier date. Another subject, in the same reference, though less directly conveyed, is the Agape, that fraternal (and once sacred) banquet, for whose practice in the Apostolic Age we must refer to a remarkable passage in one of St. Paul's Epistles, that at once explains, and is explained by, this ancient usage so often pictorially treated in Catacombs; and a mournful testimony indeed are the Apostle's words to the rapid deterioration of the holiest ordinance through the perverseness of men: — « When ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper: for in eating every one takes before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another drunken. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation ». This feast with which, throughout the first century, the Eucharistic celebration was incorporated, is represented in the Art here before us without any sign of religious purpose, — a company either seated or reclining at a lunette-formed table, partaking of food, bread and fish, sometimes with wine; the only sym-

lolic detail being the cross marked on loaves, but not of a kind peculiar to Christians — such bread, called *panis decussatus*, thus divided by incisions into four parts, being of common use among the Romans.

As to the very complex indications of date, no era proper to Christians is found for our guidance in the earlier Catacomb-monuments; but about the end of the IV century appears the year of the Roman Bishop, e. g. *Salvo Siricio Episcopo*, or, *temporibus Sancti Innocentii*, the last formula, no doubt, adopted after the death of the Pope named; or (proof of the comparative equality in episcopal rank according to primitive ideas) the date by the years of other Bishops also, in inscriptions belonging to their several dioceses; and from the beginning of the VI century are indicated the years not only of Bishops, but priests, deacons, or even the matrons presiding over female communities. Date by Consulates was rarely adopted in these epigraphs before the III, but common in the two next centuries — again falling into disuse after the middle of the VI century; and the year of the Emperor, which was enjoined for the dating of all public acts by Justinian, A. D. 537, scarcely in any instance occurs before that period. We follow with interest in these chiselled lines the last traces of the existence, and the gradual dying out of that proud institution, the Roman Consulate; the unostentatious language of these Christian epitaphs here supplying the last monumental evidence to this once great historic reality. The Consulate proper to Rome expired in the year 534, after being held in the last instance by Decius Paulinus; in the following year, however, reappearing when assumed by Belisarius after his Italian victories. From 534 to 514, only one Consul (for the Eastern Empire) is on record; and in that last year the office was suppressed by Justinian, though once more assumed, in his own person, by an Emperor, namely Justin, in 566—up to which date the computation, since the act of suppression, had been according to the years (as we see in these epitaphs) *post Consulatum Basilii*, « after the Consulate

of Basilus » — who had last held that office at Constantinople. Curious in this lapidary style is the use of the epithet *divus*, long given to defunct Emperors without scruple, as a mere civil honour, by their Christian subjects. Together with characteristics of brevity and simplicity, we notice, in these epitaphs, a serene spirit of resignation that never allows vent to passionate utterance; the word *dolens* is the strongest expression of sorrow, and this but rarely occurring. As the colder formalities of the classic lapidary style were gradually laid aside, extatic ejaculations of prayer and hope were admitted—*Vivas in Deo* (most ancient in such use) — *Vive in æterno*, — *Pax spiritu tuo*, — *In pace Domini dormias* — frequently introduced before the period of Constantine's conversion, but later falling into disuse — *In pace* continuing to be the established Christian formula—though also found in the epitaphs of Jews; while the *Vixit in pace*, very rare in Roman inscriptions, appears commonly among those of Africa and of several French cities—otherwise that distinctive phrase of the Pagan epitaph, *vixit* (as if even in the records of the grave to present life rather than death to the mental eye) does not pertain to Christian terminology. Various usages of the primitive Church, important to her history, are attested by these epigraphs—as the classification of the Clergy into Bishops, priests, deacons, acolytes, exorcists—and the recognition of another revered class, the pious widows, *matrona vidua Dei* — of one among whom we read on her epitaph that she « never burdened the Church », -- Here also do we find proof of the dedication of females, the *ancilla Dei*, or *Virgo Dei* — first type of the consecrated nun—sometimes, it seems, so set apart by the vows of their parents from infancy. Interesting is it to trace the growth of a feeling which, from the utterance of prayer for the dead, passed to the invoking of *their* intercessions for the living—as *vivas in Deo et roga*; and the recommending of their spirits to some specially revered saint, rather as a formula of pious valediction than the expression of anything like dogma in



regard to human intercessors, as — *in nomine Petri, in pace Christi*.

The faith of the primitive Church as to the Divine Being, her Founder and Head, is clear, as in letters of light, on these monumental pages: we read it (to cite one remarkable example) conveyed in the strangely—confused Latin and Greek not unfrequently found among Christian epitaphs, with the following distinct utterance —

ΖΗΣΗΣ ΙΝ ΔΕΟ ΧΡΙΣΤΟ ΤΑΗ ΙΝ ΠΑΚΕ

i. e. « Mayest thou live in God Christ, Sylva, in peace », we read it in the formulas where this holy name is otherwise accompanied with what declares belief — as, *in Christo Deo*, or *in D. Christo*; or in the Greek — εν Θεω Κυριω Χριστω (sic).

Again, alike distinctly expressed in other formulas, at the epitaph's close, as *in pace et in* — with the monogram XP, implying the obvious sequel, « Christo »; also in the rudely-traced line with which one inscription finishes: *Nutricatus Deo Cristo marturibus*; in one curious example of the Latin language's decline: *Regina vias in Domino zesu*; and in the Greek εχους, sometimes at the beginning, evidently intended as dedication in the name of God. Alike clearly, though less frequently, enounced is the worship of a Divine Spirit, as an aspect, or in more strict theologic phrase, Person of the Deity, e. g. *in pace cum spiritu sancta* (sic) -- *vias in Spiritu sanc*. And indeed no moral truth could be more convincingly established by monumental proof than the unanimous belief with which the Church, at this first and purest phase in her history, directed adoring regards to the « Logos », the perfect Image of the Father, as true and essential Deity.

Below the surface of the Roman Campagna it is supposed that from 800 to 900 miles of excavated corridors, interspersed with chambers in various forms, extend their marvellous ramifications; and between six and seven millions is

the assumed number of the Christian dead here deposited during primitive ages (1). In much the greater part it is certain that these hypogees were formed for Christian worship, instruction, and interment, before the period of the first converted emperor: but it is also indisputably proved that they continued in use for devotional purposes, and received many pictorial decorations long afterwards; likewise that works of excavating were in progress till so late as the beginning of the fifth century. The idea that they ever served for the *habitation* of numbers, during persecution, is erroneous, assuming indeed what is materially impossible, owing to the formation of their far-stretching labyrinths, small chapels, and story above story of narrow passages. We read, it is true, of the martyrdom of saintly bishops while in the very act of officiating at their humble altars; of several among the earliest Roman pontiffs, who, during extreme peril, took refuge in such retreats—as did Alexander I (A. D. 409-49), Stephen I (253-57), and Sixtus II, who was put to death in one of these subterranean sanctuaries (A. D. 258); and Pope Cajus (283-96) is said to have actually lived for eight years in catacombs, from which he only came out to suffer martyrdom (296). With Mr. Northcote (whose work is a *vade mecum* for this range of antiquities) we may conclude that not the *multitude* of the faithful, but the pontiffs alone, or others especially sought after by myrmidors of power, were at any time resident for long periods in these retreats, in no part of which do we see anything like preparation for dwelling or for any other purposes save worship and interment; though indeed an epitaph, by St. Damasus, in the Callixtan Catacombs, implies the fact that at some period those cemeteries were inhabited:—

« Hic habitasse prius sanctos cognosce e debes ».

(1) Father Marchi, who makes this conjecture, considers it to fall short of, rather than exceed, the truth.

But that Saint (elected to the Papacy 366), cannot be cited as a contemporary witness to ages of persecution; at periods subsequent to which, however, we read of Pope Liberius taking refuge (352), in the cemetery called after St. Agnes, from the outrages and insolence of the then ascendant Arian sect; of Pope Boniface I, so late as between 418-422, passing some time in a similar retreat, to withdraw from the faction that supported his rival Eulalius; considering which facts, we cannot deny that the evidence as to the *occasional* habitation of Catacombs is too conclusive to be set aside without rejecting much that claims belief in « Acts of Martyrs », and other received authorities. Of St. Urban we read (« Acts of St. Cecilia »), *latebat in sacrorum martyrum monimentis*; of St. Hippolytus (« Acts of St. Stephen », A. D. 259), *« vitam solitariam agebat in cryptis »*. Baronius states that the same pope Urban « used to celebrate masses and hold councils in the crypts of the martyrs »; and an epitaph to St. Alexander, in the Callixtan catacombs, contains the sentence – *« O tempora infauſta quibus inter ſacra et vota ne in cavernis quidam ſalvari poſſumus! »* In one terrific persecution a multitude of the faithful suffered death in catacombs on the Salarian Way, by order of the Emperor Numerianus, sand and stones being heaped up against the entrance, so as to leave buried alive those victims, of whose fate was found affecting proof long afterwards, not only in the bones of the dead, but in several silver cruets that had served for the Eucharistic celebration. An impressive circumstance accompanied the martyrdom of Pope Stephen: the ministers of death rushed into the subterranean chapel where they found him officiating, and, as if struck with sudden awe, waited till the rite was over before they slew him in his episcopal chair! As catacomb-sepulchres became gradually filled, those sections, or corridors, no longer serviceable, used to be blocked up with soil, in order thus both to separate the living from the dead, and to avoid the necessity of leaving accumulations outside. Granular tufa, which, with lithoid tufa and pozzolana, forms the material of the

volcanic strata around Rome, is the substance (easily worked, but quite unsuitable for building), in which all Roman catacombs are excavated, except those of St. Pontianus, outside the Porta Portese, and of St. Valentine, on the Flaminian Way, which are in a soil of marine and fluvial deposits, shells, fossils ec.

From the ninth century till a comparatively late period most of these Catacombs were left unexplored, perhaps entirely inaccessible, and forgotten. Mediaeval writers usually ignored their existence. That strange compilation, so curious in its fantastic suggestions and blindness to historic fact, the « *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* », (written, some critics assume, in the X — others, in the XII century, first published about 1474) enumerates, indeed, twenty-one catacombs. Flavio Biondo, writing in the fifteenth century, mentions those of St. Callixtus alone; Onofrio Panvinio, in the sixteenth century, reckons thirty-nine; Baronius, at date not much later, raises the number to forty-three. Those of St. Priscilla, entered below the Salarian Way, belonging to that mother of the Christian Senator Pudens (who received St. Peter); also those of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, near the Appian Way, have been referred to an antiquity correspondent with the apostolic age; and if those called after St. Callixtus were indeed formed long anterior to that Pope's election, A. D. 210, we may place them second in chronologic order. That several continued in use as cemeteries long after the first imperial conversion, is evident from the fact that Constantine's daughter ordered the embellishment and enlargement of those called after St. Agnes, which became in consequence more than ever frequented, — so to say, fashionable, — as a place of interment during the fourth century; a circumstance manifest in the superior regularity and spaciousness of corridors, in the more laboured execution, but inferior style, of paintings seen in those catacombs. Other facts relevant to the story of later vicissitudes may be cited: Pope Damasus (v. Baronius, anno 384) ordered a *platonía* (pavement of inlaid marbles) for that part of



the Callixtan catacombs in which, for a certain time, had lain the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul. Pope John III (560-73), who abode for a time (v. Anastasius), in the catacombs of SS. Tiburtius and Valerian, ordered all such hypogees as had suffered from barbarian spoliation to be repaired; also provided that a regular supply of bread, wine, and lights should be furnished from the Lateran Basilica for the celebrations still kept up on Sundays at the altars of these subterraneans. Towards the end of the sixth century, St. Gregory the Great indicated, among places of assemblage for the faithful on the days of the Lenten « Stations », organized by him with much solemnity and concourse, some of the cemeteries as well as principal churches of Rome. The evidences of art may be here cited, to prove comparative modernness in decorative details: the *nimbus*, for instance, around the heads of saintly figures, indicates date subsequent to the fourth century; and in the Callixtan catacombs the figure of St. Cecilia attired in cumbrous finery, jewelled head-dress, and necklaces, as also those of St. Urban and Cornelius, besides a sternly-expressive head of the Saviour, with marked characteristics of the Byzantine school, suggest origin certainly not earlier than the sixth or seventh, if not so late as the eighth, century.

The practice of frequenting these cemeteries, for prayer or for visiting the tombs of martyrs, continued common till the ninth, nor had entirely ceased even in the thirteenth century, being certainly more or less in prevalence under Honorius III (1217-27). Yet the process of transporting the bodies of martyrs from these resting-places to the City, for safer and more honoured interment, had begun under Pope Paul I (757-67), who took such precaution against the pious frauds practised by the Longobards, whilst investing Rome, led by Astolphus, — a king particularly bent upon relic-stealing; so devout in this respect were the fierce invaders of Papal territory! At later Mediaeval periods the catacombs fell into oblivion, till their ingresses became, for the most part, unknown even to the clergy; and one of the earliest

records of their being visited in later ages is found in the names of Raynuzio Farnese (father of Paul III) and the companions who descended with him, still read, beside the date 1490, in the Callixtan catacombs. Not till late in the next century, was the attention of savans directed by new lights from science, and through the revived study of antiquity, towards this field of research; subsequently to which movement excavations were carried on at intervals from 1592 to 1693; most important and fruitful in results being the labours of the indefatigable Bosio, who, after patient toils pursued enthusiastically for thirty-three years, died (1600) without completing the work projected for transmitting their profits to posterity. Its first publication was in 1632, under the title, « Roma Sotterranea », compiled from Bosio's Mss. by Severano (an Oratorian priest); and a few years subsequently another Oratorian, Arringhi, brought out, with additions, the same work translated into Latin. Next followed (1702) the « Inscriptiones Antiquae » of Fabretti, official *custode* to the catacombs; and the learned work, « Cimiteri dei Santi Martiri », (1720) by Boldetti, the fruit of thirty years' labours, surpassed all hitherto contributions on this subject alike in vivacity of description, extensive knowledge, and well-sustained argument. Only next in merit and authority is the « Sculture e Pitture Sacre » (Sacred Sculptures and Paintings from the Cemeteries of Rome, by Bottari, 1737-54, an illustrated work evincing thorough acquaintance with its theme. The « Manners of the Primitive Christians » by the Dominican Mamachi, one of the most valuable archaeologic publications from the Roman press (1752), comprises, though not dedicated to this particular range, a general review of catacomb-monuments, together with others that throw light on the usages or ideas of the early Church. Interesting, though incomplete, is the contribution of the Jesuit father, Marchi, « Architettura della Roma Sotterranea Cristiana », or « Monuments of Primitive Christian Art in the Metropolis of Christianity (1814) » which the writer only lived to carry to the close of one volume;

exclusively dedicated to the constructive and topographic aspects of his subject — this publication having been suspended, long before his death, owing to the defection of subscribers after that year '48, so fatal to the interests of his religious order. The merit of his argument, in throwing light on its theme, is, that it entirely sets at rest the question of supposed connexion between the Christian catacombs and Pagan *arenaria*; and establishes that in no one instance were the former a mere continuance or enlargement of the latter, as neither could the quality of soil in which these cemeteries were opened have served for building, nor their plan and dimensions have permitted the extracting of material for such purposes.

One could not, indeed, desire clearer refutation of the theory respecting the identity of the two formations than that which meets the eye in the St. Agnes catacombs, -- ascending in which from the lower story, that originally formed for Christian purposes, we enter the Pagan *arenaria* above those corridors sacred to the dead, this higher part being totally distinct in plan and in the dimensions of winding passages, as requisite for extracting the fine pozzolana sand. Another valuable illustration to the same range of sacred antiquities, is the work by Padre Garrucci, *Vetri ornati* (« Glasses adorned with figures in gold, from the cemeteries of the primitive Christians »), with engravings of 318 tazze, all presenting groups or heads, gilt by a peculiar process on glass. As to the use of these, Garrucci differs from Buonarrotti and others, who assume all such vessels to have served for sacramental purposes; his view referring many of them to remoter periods — to the second and third, instead of exclusively to the fourth century, as was the conclusion of previous writers. Among the figured designs on these glasses are several of great significance; and of their subjects one of the most frequently repeated is the group of SS. Peter and Paul side by side, usually as busts, and with not the slightest indication of superiority in *one* over the *other* Apostle, — rather, indeed, a perfect

*parity* in honours and deserts, as implied in the single crown suspended, in some instances, over the heads of both; or in their simultaneous crowning by the Saviour, whose figure is hovering above the pair alike thus honoured at the Divine Master's hand. Between these two Apostles is often placed the Virgin, or some other female saint, especially Agnes, admitted to like honour; and in certain examples, either Mary or another female, in attitude of prayer, appears on larger scale than the Apostles, such naive treatment being intended to convey idea of *relative*, not, of course, absolute honour, and very probably (as, indeed, is Garucci's inference) expressing the still loftier ideal of the Church, personified in the prayerful Mother as the great earthly Intercessor, supported by the chief witnesses to Divine doctrine. It may be assumed that the origin *in art* of that supreme dignity assigned to the Virgin Mother (a source of such anti-evangelic superstition in practice) may be referred simply to this tendency of idealizing, not so much her person as her position, amidst the hierarchic grouping, — thus to personify the intercessory office, the link formed by prayer between simple-minded faith and theologic infallibility. Mary also appears on other tazze, standing between two trees, or between two columns, on which are perching birds, symbols of the beatified spirit, or of the resurrection; and in one instance only do we see the nimbus round her head—proof that this representation at least must be of comparatively late origin (1). Among other

(1) The nimbus was originally given, in Christian Art, to sovereigns and allegoric personages generally, as the symbol of power, distinction; but with this difference, that round the heads of sancti and orthodox kings or emperors, it is luminous or gilded; round those of Gentile potentates, coloured, red, green, or blue. About the middle of the third century it begins to appear, and earliest on these glasses, as special attribute of Christ; later being given to the heads of Angels, to the Evangelists, to the other Apostles; and finally to the Blessed Virgin and all Saints, but not as their inviolable attribute till the VII century (v. Buonarroti, *Vasi antichi*).



uncommon subjects we see, Daniel giving a cake to the Dragon, from the book, « Bel and the Dragon », considered by Protestants apocryphal (found also among reliefs on Christian sarcophagi); and—striking evidence to the influence from that Pagan art still overshadowing the new faith in its attempts at similar modes of expression! — Daedalus and Minerva superintending groups of labourers at different tasks; Cupid and Psyche (no doubt admitted in appreciation of the profound meanings that illumine that beautiful fable); Achilles, and the three Graces, here introduced with some sense not so intelligible. This choice of a comparatively gay and mundane class of subjects seems to confirm what is conjectured by Garucci, as to certain among these tazze being appropriated *not* to the sacramental solemnity, but to various occasions in domestic life,—the nuptials, the names-giving, the baptism, and funeral, besides the *Agape*, that primitive blending of the fraternal feast with the Eucharistic rite and communion, so frequently represented in catacomb-paintings, that show the symbolic viands, the lamp, or the fish, and loaves marked with a cross, spread before companies of the faithful seated round a *sigma*, (semi-circular table).

As to the literature illustrative of Rome's Catacombs, the last and most precious addition,—a yet incipient work, which may be expected, in its completeness, to supply the fullest investigation of its subject, — is De Rossi's « Subterranean and Christian Rome », executed with all the ability and erudition to be looked for in a writer of such eminence. We find here the fullest history of researches carried out in catacombs from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century; the learned author assigning four epochs to the story of these cemeteries, commencing from apostolic times, and successively extending over the third century; over the period of the newly-attained freedom and peace guaranteed to the Church through Constantine (A. D. 312); and over the fifth century, whence dates the gradual abandonment and decay of all such sanctuaries, owing to their then conditions, impaired

by shocks of barbarian invasion, devastated by Goths and Lombards, till at last, towards the close of the ninth century, they fell into neglect or oblivion.

The first impression on descending into catacombs, when the light of day is suddenly lost, and the eye follows the dim perspective of corridors lined with tier above tier of funereal niches, partially shown by torch-light, is one that chills and repels. Imagination calls up what Reason rejects, and sports, as if fascinated, with ideas of danger—mysterious, indefinable—corrected, indeed, by the higher associations and reminiscences that take possession of the mind in any degree acquainted with that past so replete with noble examples from the story of those who *here*—

« . . . in the hidden chambers of the dead,  
Our guiding lamp with fire immortal fed ».

We may, perhaps, descend into these abysses from some lonely spot, whence the Vatican cupola is distinctly visible; and certainly nothing could be more glorious, from the Roman Catholic point of view, than the confronting of such a monument to triumphant religion with the dark and rudely-adorned subterraneans once serving as sanctuaries of the Church subsequently raised, at this same centre, to such proud supremacy! Another thought, that may spring from this range of antiquarian study, and invest its objects with still deeper interest, is that of promise for something higher than either Catholicism or Protestantism, in the Christianity of the future.

As to the primitive mode of interment, the early Church may be said to have taken as model the Redeemer's sepulchre—a cavern, with entrance closed by a stone, in which but one body lay; and in the especially honoured tombs of martyrs, or other illustrious dead, the form called *arcosolium*, like an excavated sarcophagus with arched niche above, supplied the norma for the later-adopted altar of solid stone (instead of the plain wooden table in earliest use), with relics inserted in a cavity under the *mensa*; the practice

of consecrating the Eucharist over such martyr-tombs having passed into the univereal discipline of the Latin Church, through a decree of Pope Felix (269—275), ordering that henceforth the mass should ever be celebrated over such burial-places of the holy dead:

« Altar quietam debitam  
Præstat beatis ossibus »,

as Prudentius testifies to this ancient usage. From the same poet ( « Hymn on St. Hippolytus » ) we learn that these subterraneans were not originally, as now, in total darkness, but lighted, however dimly, by those shafts ( *luminaria* ) still seen at intervals piercing the soil above our heads, though no longer in every instance serving for such purpose. The circumstances under which they have been rediscovered, within modern times, form a singular detail in their vicissitudes; and it is remarkable that the period of greatest religious conflict among Christian nations was that which witnessed the revival of this long-forgotten testimony, conveyed in monumental language, to the faith and practice of the primitive Church. Energetically as these hypogees were explored in the XVI and XVII centuries, little was accomplished, in comparison with results quite recent, by any earlier undertakings; and much of the wealth secured was lost through Vandalic spoliation or inexcusable neglect. It was in December, 1593, that the first exploration was commenced by Bosio, in company with Pompeo Ugonio and others; and subsequently, between that year and 1600, were explored by the former all subterraneans into which he could find access along the Appian, Salarian, Flaminian, Ostian, Latin, and Portuense Ways. In the library of the Oratorian fathers at Rome are four large folio volumes of MS., entirely written by Bosio, comprising the vast material for the work he did not live to produce; and another example of industry, frustrated by fatal accident, was the compilation intended to comprise all the art-objects, epigraphs, &c. from cata-

combs, on which Marangoni and Boldetti had been occupied for seventeen years, when the whole fell a prey to the flames in 1720; the few fragments saved being, however, turned to account by the former, and brought out as an appendix to his « *Acta S. Victorini* », 1740.

Bosio, in the course of his long labours, discovered only one *group* of sepulchres historically noted (in 1619); another such was found by Boldetti in 1720; and in 1845 Father Marchi accomplished like discovery in the tombs of the martyrs Protus and Hyacinthus. The catacombs called after the Christian matron Lucina, were re-opened by the accidental sinking of the soil in 1688; and access to those of St. Tertullianus, on the Latin Way, was alike due to mere accident. In 1849, the Cavalier de Rossi began his task of directing excavations, for the costs of which a monthly subvention had been assigned by the Pope. Soon afterwards Pius IX appointed an « apostolic visitation », for ascertaining the condition of all Roman catacombs; and a more practically important step, that soon followed, was the creation of a « Committee of sacred antiquities », with charge and superintendence over all works and objects within that sphere, under whose direction the first excavations were commenced in 1851; by this arrangement being now superseded the ordinance of Pope Clement X, dated 1672, intrusting the care of all these hypogees to the Cardinal-vicar, under the authority of whom, and that of the papal sacristan (a prelate), subterranean works used to be directed by *custodi*, as official deputies.

Even whilst that earlier organization continued, the loss and destruction of monuments from catacombs reflects most unfavourably on those responsible. Marangoni (after long experience as assistant *custode* with Boldetti) tells us that thousands of epigraphs were taken from these cemeteries to the church of S. Maria in Trastevere; seven cartfuls to S. Giovanni de' Fiorentini; two cartfuls to another church of S. Giovanni in Rome; yet, at the present day, only about



a score of epitaphs remain in the portico of the former, not *one* in either of the two latter churches. Mazzolari (« Vie Sacre », 1779), describes what he had himself seen, — the deliberate destruction of a corridor and *cubiculum* (sepulchral chapel) in the catacombs of St. Lawrence, almost immediately after they had been reopened in the long — inaccessible cemetery on the Tiburtine Way.

The works carried on within recent years have led to most interesting results. First of all may be classed, for importance, the discovery of the vast hypogee which took its name from St. Callixtus, though of origin still earlier; not founded, but enlarged, by that Pope; and in which all the Roman Bishops were interred during the third century; the first mention of this, as a cemetery whose possession was legally guaranteed to the Church, occurring under the reign of Septimius Severus. About two miles beyond the Appian Gateway stands, on elevated ground, an old brick edifice with apse and vaulted roof, long used as a gardener's storehouse, now identified as the chapel raised for his own sepulture by Pope St. Damasus. Near this were begun, in 1844, the researches that led to the opening of those long unexplored catacombs, at a short distance from the basilica of St. Sebastian, below which extend other subterraneans long supposed to be the real Callixtan. Some years previously had been found, near this spot, a broken marble slab with the letters of an inscription — NELIUS MARTYR; and the discovery of the tomb of St. Cornelius soon rewarded the labours here undertaken; the missing fragment, with the letters COR . . . EP (iscopus), within a *cubiculum* dimly lighted from above, being soon found near a tomb, beside which are the painted figures of St. Cornelius and St. Cyprian of Carthage, near the figures of two other saints; one designated by the written name « Sixtus », another martyred pope; the two first thus associated, because commemorated by the Church on the same day, having both suffered on the 16th of September, and in life-time held frequent correspondence. These four fig-

ures have all the nimbus; also the same characteristics of style; and a period not later than the sixth or seventh century can be assigned to these, as to other paintings in the same subterranean.

In considering the selection to which this primitive Art was so strictly confined, we are struck by two predominant features, — the avoidance of those subjects invested with most awful sacredness, as the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, the institution of the Eucharist; also the pervading mysticism, which ever led to prefer such themes, in miracle, type, or historic incident, as suggest more than they represent; for, in fact, the more frequently-recurring scenes, as here treated, *always* imply a truth or principle addressed to the moral sense of the believer, lying far too deep for the apprehension of the uninitiate. In sculpture this is more strikingly carried out; and in this walk of early sacred Art we have the finest example in the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, prefect of Rome, who died a neophyte, A. D. 359, and was buried at St. Peter's, where his beautifully-chiselled tomb was rediscovered, after ages of oblivion, during the works for the new basilica—still being left near its original place, in the crypt.

In freedom of design, in conception as well as execution, these reliefs surpass all others of the same epoch: ten groups are ranged along two files, divided by pilasters, the lower under canopies alternately circular and pointed; the subjects historic: the principal and central figure that of the Saviour, in form a beautiful youth, seated between two Apostles, with His feet upon the earth, personified as an old man just emerging from the ground and holding over his head a canopy of draperies. The Sacrifice of Abraham; the sufferings of Job; the Fall of Adam and Eve; Daniel in the Lions' Den; Christ entering Jerusalem seated on an ass; again seen before Pilate, who is washing his hands; the Denial of St. Peter, and the Arrest of that Apostle, are the representations ranged around; but more curious still are the groups of

sheep, minutely sculptured between the arches, serving to attest both the simplicity and earnestness of minds to which such art-treatment could be addressed — these animals being here seen to perform acts mystically selected from both the Old and New Testaments, and thus naively admitted to personify, in type, Moses, John the Baptist, and the Redeemer Himself. A sheep strikes water from the rock; another performs the miracle of multiplying loaves; another gives baptism to a similarly typical creature of its kind; a sheep touches a mummy-like figure with a wand, to represent the raising of Lazarus; and a sheep receives the tablets of the Law on the mount. Turning to the collection in the Lateran Museum, we observe the most interesting sculptured series on a large sarcophagus brought from St. Paul's, where it was probably placed at the time of the building of that basilica in the fourth century; the groups in relief on its front presenting a valuable record of religious ideas; but we are shocked to find here the traditional reverence of earlier days so soon departed from in the admission, among the now larger art-range, of such a subject as the Supreme Being, manifest alike in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit under the aspect of humanity, with identity of type, strongly marked and severe, indicating middle age, in each of the co-equal Three. First in order is the creation of Eve out of Adam's side, by God the Son, in presence of the Father and Spirit; the former seated, and in act of blessing the new-born woman; the latter standing behind the Father's throne. Next appears the Son awarding to Adam and Eve the symbols of labour, which was part of their punishment, — a sheaf of wheat to the man, a lamb (for spinning wool) to the woman; and it is remarkable that in this instance the second Divine Person wears different aspect, more youthful and beautiful than when associated with the Father — thus to announce the mystery of His Incarnation. Successively follow the miracles operated by our Lord upon water, bread, and wine; the Adoration of the Magi (the Virgin of a somewhat severe matronly type), with the Holy

Spirit (again in human aspect), standing beside the chair of the Mother and Child; the restoring of Sight to the Blind; the Raising of Lazarus; St. Peter denying Christ; St. Peter between two Jews (his arrest probably intended); Moses striking the Rock; the Story of Jonas; Christ entering Jerusalem; Daniel between the Lions—and this last of very original treatment, for, besides the personages essential to the story, another is also introduced, on each side of Daniel, meant as inferable for the third Divine Person, holding by the hair of his head the prophet Habakkuc, who brings the bread (here an admitted type of the Eucharist) for Daniel's sustenance—see the book, « Bel and the Dragon ». As to the selection from the miracles of our Lord (constantly repeated in others as in these reliefs), their deeper significance is admitted in the following instances: the healing of the paralytic implies absolution from sin; the giving of sight to the blind, illumination through faith; the multiplication of loaves and fishes, as well as the change of water into wine, the Eucharist; Moses striking water from the rock, implies baptism; the adoration of the wise men, the calling of the Gentiles to Christ. Job is introduced as a witness to the resurrection of the body; and especially conspicuous is the type of the Saviour's resurrection in the story of Jonas. Elias, carried up to Heaven, signifies the ascension of Him whose last sufferings and triumphs on earth are reverently shown under veils of symbolism. On two sarcophagi in the Lateran museum is seen the Labarum, guarded by soldiers, with birds (symbols of the Apostles, or of beatified spirits) on the arms of the cross supporting the holy monogram; and on another such sculptured tomb here, are details of architecture where we recognise a Christian basilica and a baptistery of circular form, no doubt correct representations of such sacred buildings in the fourth or fifth century. Turning from this Museum, we find another remarkable example of funereal sculpture in a small, almost dark chapel (no longer used for worship) at St. Peter's—the tomb of an illustrious wedded pair, Probus Anicius, praetorian prefect,



who died A. D. 395, and of his wife Proba Falconia, whose virtues are commemorated, with those of her husband, in several poetic tributes still extant: on their sarcophagus here we see the Saviour, youthful and beardless, with the book of the Gospels, standing on a rock from which issue the four rivers of Paradise (a type of the Evangelists); beside Him SS. Peter and Paul; and, divided by colonnettes, the other Apostles, in that attitude, with one uplifted hand, understood to express assent or reverential attention. Elsewhere, at St Peter's, St. Maria Maggiore, S. Prassede, are to be seen ancient Christian sarcophagi in Rome, adorned by observable sculptures.

But the Museum founded by Pius IX at the Lateran contains so rich an abstract from this primitive art-range, that it is to that centre we should turn, rather than any other, in order to study and appreciate. Here are the fac-similes of paintings that have been judiciously selected for their mystic interest; besides the most complete series of sculptured sarcophagi, in the greater number, no doubt, of the IV century, though some may be supposed earlier—of the third, or even the second. Agincourt points out merits of treatment in some of these sacred reliefs — e. g. the Ascent of Elias to Heaven (in this Museum), the Crossing of the Red Sea, the bestowal of the Keys on St Peter, — that led him to assume for them origin within the first two centuries of our era; and in the sarcophagi that stand 1st and 7th, left, in this gallery, one with vintage-scenes divided into compartments by figures of the Good Shepherd in higher relief; also in one of the statues here, the « Pastor Bonus », are artistic qualities that seem to indicate date anterior to the IV century (Perkins, « Tuscan Sculptors ») The Christian Museum at the Vatican is rich in lamps, with sacred emblems, from Catacombs; also in bronzes of early periods, and in terrific instruments of torture, that impress us with the reality of what has been suffered for our Faith. Here too is the most complete series of Christian glasses with gilt figures, the very specimens so well explained

by Padre Garrucci,—objects rarely to be seen elsewhere, though a few are in the Uffizi gallery at Florence, and another set, from a Sicilian Museum, were recently purchased by the British Government at Rome. The Museum at the Collegio Romano contains, among antiques of various classes, some interesting art-relics of the primitive and mediæval Church—among the earliest, a marble vase with the Adoration of the Magi in relief. In the Propaganda Museum are a few of those gilt glasses from Catacombs, one with the group of the Virgin Mother between the two Apostles; and objects of various description from the same subterraneans, as well as copies from paintings in their chapels, are to be seen at the « Custodia » of Relics in the Apollinare College, made public for the Lenten Stations on the Thursday before Holy Week.

Besides those above named, there is another remarkable range of subjects serving to illustrate doctrine or religious usages; and the judgment of competent critics, who assign to certain paintings antiquity so high as the first or second century, enhances the interest we naturally feel in such examples. Among these may be noticed the group of two men, one kneeling, supposed to record the story of some person *lapsed* during the period of persecution, or other notorious sinner publicly reconciled to the Church before death. The Five Wise Virgins (Catacombs of St. Agnes) are represented with torches instead of lamps, conformably to Roman practice, but each carrying also a vessel for oil. A group of the Saviour in the midst of the Twelve Apostles (Catacomb of SS. Nereus and Achilleus), — two only, SS. Peter and Paul, being seated, whilst the others stand—seems evidence to the idea of superiority alike shared by those co-founders of the Church in Rome. A banquet at which are seated guests waited upon by two allegoric personages, Peace and Love (Irene and Agape, whose names are written near, is supposed to represent the joys of Paradise. A group representing two persons, male and female, the latter with arms extended in prayer, beside a tripod-table on which are

laid a fish and loaves marked with the cross (Catacomb of St. Callixtus), is a strikingly-expressive illustration of the Eucharistic doctrine, with not only the proper substance of that sacrament in one kind, but also the mystic emblem of our Lord's person—the Divine Presence—associated with it; another sacramental subject, in the same catacomb, a man pouring water over the head of a boy while both stand in a river, conveying proof that infant, or at least, pedo-baptism was the practice of the ancient Church. It is, indeed, in the aggregate, a grand and affecting ideal of primitive Christianity that this monumental series, painted, sculptured, and chiselled, presents to us—a moral picture of purity and peace, earnestness without fanaticism, — mystic ordinances undegraded by superstition, true devotion manifest in the supreme sacrifice of the heart, the mind, and life. The varied and mystic illustration of sacraments, the select representation of such miracles as convey lessons of Divine goodness and love, or confirm belief in immortal life, may be said to revolve around one subject, that dominates like a star whose hallowed light illumines the entire sphere — namely, the person and office of the Redeemer, towards whom all hope and faith tend, from whom proceed all power, all strengthening and consoling virtue.

The idea of a headship vested in St. Peter appears occasionally, with decided expression, though indeed tempered by other proofs of an admission to spiritual equality for those co-founders, Saints Peter and Paul. In the sculptures (the greater number referred to the fourth and fifth centuries) this idea of St. Peter's supremacy becomes more manifest, as natural at periods when the Roman bishopric was rapidly advancing in power and grandeur. Moses and the Apostle constantly appear in juxta-position, the one striking the rock, the other standing between two Jews; the aspect of both absolutely *identical*; and the wand, symbolic of authority, as often held by the Apostle as by the Lawgiver. In an enamel on glass this becomes an absolute interchange of offices, —

St. Peter (designated by name) striking water from the rock in place of Moses. In regard to another vast range of monuments, the epigraphy of the catacombs, we must turn for the best of authorities to De' Rossi's « *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* », an immense compilation, intended to comprise nearly 11,000 epigraphs, all collected by the writer during twenty-one years of assiduous research, and to be eventually classified, under the same gentleman's direction, in the Christian Museum at the Lateran.

De Rossi infers that numerous decorative details hitherto ascribed to the third century, are really of much higher antiquity, approaching even the Apostolic age; proof of which he sees in the classic style of various frescoes and decorations on stucco; also in the *constructed* (not merely excavated) chambers and corridors provided with ample recesses for sarcophagi, instead of the usual sepulchral niches; lastly, in various epitaphs wanting the known Christian formulas, and with nomenclature quite classic—found in certain hypogees. Till the latter years of the third century no spoliation had impaired these cemeteries, no intolerant edict had driven the faithful from their limits; but during the Diocletian persecution all places of Christian assemblage were burnt down or devastated, all ecclesiastical books given to the flames; the Roman see being left vacant for more than six (if not seven) years. That tempest was stilled by the relenting policy of Maxentius, A. D. 306; but the restitution of what the Church had lost did not ensue before 311.

The legalized possession of cemeteries and that of their churches likewise, by the Christians under Pagan government, is one historic point clearly established by De Rossi's arguments and proofs. Valerian forbid to the faithful even access into these sacred retreats; but Gallienus restored such sites to the bishops, implying the recognition of an aggregate claim; and during the third century, at latest, that possession was generally guaranteed. The Christians of Antioch applied to Aurelian, in order to compel a bishop deposed in council,



the heretical Paul of Samosata, to quit «the house of the Church»; and in the sequel the decrees of a Catholic synod was enforced by a Pagan magistrate. An ingenious suggestion in the «Roma Cristiana» is that originally, perhaps, it was under colour of associations for mutual aid and charitable interment that the Christians obtained the first concealed tolerance, gradually extending to their places of worship, as well as those of sepulture.

The chronology of primitive Christian art, cannot, of course, be brought within bounds of distinct definition; and has been subject of various conjectures. Its earliest forms were purely symbolism: sacred emblems, the Lamb, the dove, the ship, the lyre, worn on rings or bracelets, or embroidered on vestments (*vide* Clement of Alexandria, second century); if any human figures were represented, no other save the Good Shepherd, mentioned by Tertullian early in the third century; as sometimes seen, probably enamelled, on chalices; but it seems certain all attempt at portraiture were prohibited till after the time of Constantine; and Mabillon concludes that ten centuries had passed before images were permitted to appear above the altar.

The beauty of the social picture presented by those ages of faith could indeed be little appreciated, were we only to regard ritual and aesthetic aspects apart from life's daily realities and practical duties. It is well known how the economies and charities of the primitive Church were regulated: one-third of ecclesiastical revenues going to the relief of the poor; another to the bishops and clergy; another to public worship and sacred edifices. Before the end of the fourth century, existed hospitals for the poor and aged, foundling asylums, and *xenodochia* for travellers, all supported by the several communities, and mostly founded by bishops who were their local superiors. The Christian stranger was always at home among his fellow-worshippers, and maintained gratuitously, if he brought letters of recommendation (*epistolæ formatae*) from the bishop of his diocese. In each city now rose, beside the episcopal residence, an ample edifice open to all

strangers, with separate wings for the sick for infants, and the aged, each under its proper administration « There (says St. Gregory of Nazianzen) disease is endured with calmness; adversity becomes happiness! » In the observance of fast-days it was enjoined that the economies of the table should be set aside for the relief of widows, orphans, or others in want (v. the « Pastor » of Hermas). The religious instruction of children was from an early period provided for on system. Proof how promptly was condemned by the Church, and, to the extent of her means, put down, that great social evil of Paganism, slavery, is supplied with striking force in Christian epigraphs; among the entire number, about 14,000, belonging to the first six centuries, scarcely six and, as Mr. Northcote shows, two or three among these doubtful, containing allusion, in their brief and simple language, to this fundamental division of ancient Roman society; whilst *alumni* (adopted foundlings) are named in a greater number of Christian inscriptions than in the entire range of those from Pagan monuments,—a further proof of the prevailing beneficence, the new-born domestic virtues, to which so many outcast children owed their maintenance, and even life, as members of the Christian community.

Before the nineteenth year of Diocletian, date of the persecuting edict, which enforced the destruction of all Christian churches, the new worship is said to have been celebrated in forty buildings publicly dedicate to sacred use in Rome.

The clergy (till the end of this primitive period) continued to officiate attired in the classic white vestments common to Roman citizens, but distinguished by the long hair and beard of philosophers; and not till the Constantinian period did the bishops begin to wear purple; not till the ninth century was that primitive white costume (which sometimes was slightly adorned in purple or gold, laid aside by the priesthood generally.

An example of superiority in the constructive character of a Catacomb, conveying proof of comparatively late origin, is seen in that of SS. Peter and Marcellinus, which com-

municates with the mausoleum of St. Helena, but can now be only entered, and to slight extent penetrated, in the villa of Signor Grande, about two miles from Rome, on the Via Labicana; the portion of this cemetery here accessible having been re-opened in 1838, as described by Marchi. Entering, we are struck by the unusual width and loftiness of the corridors, and the ample arched recesses, evidently destined for sarcophagi, instead of the narrow sepulchral deposits elsewhere seen; but most remarkable is an ornamental detail (not found in any other Catacomb) of rich mosaic pavement, for the greater part in diamond-shaped cubes of black and white stone, one compartment adorned with a dove holding an olive-branch, well designed in coloured marbles. Diverging from this principal corridor, are others now entirely filled with soil; one permeable to some extent, but becoming narrower and lower as we advance, till further progress is impeded. Above one of the two entrances, from each of which is a descent by marble stairs, are the ruins of an oratory in antique Roman brickwork with some traces of architectural ornament, cornices, mouldings, fragments of sculptured frieze, broken columns of marble and peperino. Another instance of superior constructive style is seen in the Catacombs, reopened 1852, of Domitilla entered from the estate of Flavia Domitilla, a Christian Matron, where a façade and vestibule present characteristics of the best imperial period; and arabesque paintings here—birds and winged children—are distinguished by beauty and truthfulness entitling them to rank beside the most graceful fresco adornments in the columbaria of the Augustan age, or those recently discovered in the villa of Livia at Prima Porta (See De Rossi's report in his *Bullettino di Archæol. Cristiana*, May '63). — The Catacombs of S. Priscilla, referred to the highest antiquity, are also remarkable for details of their plan and art-works. Entered from a vineyard of the Irish College on the Salarian Way, these were found permeable in only one of the four stories into which they are divided; and in some parts their interiors

are supported by walls in firm brickwork that appears of the IV century. Admirable, among ornamental features here, are various graceful stucco-reliefs, garlands, and designs of the *guilloche* character, reminding of the finest similar details in classic art. The largest oratory, in form a Latin cross, is called the « Greek Chapel » from the inscriptions in that language there read. Among the most interesting paintings is a group where a veiled female is seen in act of being crowned by two others; and again in prayer, amidst other figures, one of whom seems inviting her to enter a species of tabernacle, — conjectured to represent the entrance of the Soul, received by the Saviour, into eternal bliss; another group being formed of the Blessed Virgin and Child with St. Joseph, who is bearded but not aged-looking, perhaps here for the first time introduced in sacred art (see De Rossi on the earliest representations of St. Joseph, *Bullettino* for April 65). Another is interpreted by Bosio (the first to explore these Catacombs) as the ceremony of giving the veil to a consecrated virgin—namely, the daughter of St. Priscilla, by Pope Pius I, who is seated on a massive episcopal throne; St. Hermes, his brother, and Priscilla herself attending; and opposite these persons, the Madonna seated, with the Divine Child, as if manifest in order to give highest sanction to that religious act. Conjecture has assumed antiquity so high as the first century for some paintings in these Catacombs; and in their treatment both composition and costume awaken classic reminiscences. In the Winter of 1854 were discovered both the long-buried basilica and Catacombs of Pope St. Alexander on the Nomentan Way — the hypogee in this instance extending on the same level with the ruined Church from which we enter it; less interesting than others, as no monuments of artistic character are found here; but still well worthy of being visited.

There seems reason to conclude that both pictures and sculptures had begun to appear, though not in very common use, among the ornaments of sacred buildings, prior to the



last Pagan persecution; and that it was in consequence of the outrage inflicted on such art-objects under Diocletian, that the Council of Elvira, A. D. 303, passed the variously-interpreted decree: « *Ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur* ».

The actual number of catacombs has been very differently reported. Aringhi, followed by other writers, first raised it so high as sixty; but without proof adduced from personal experience. De Rossi sets the question at rest by supplying a list in which are reckoned forty-two; not more than twenty-six being of vast extent, and five shown to be of origin subsequent to the peace secured for the Church under Constantine,—all within a circle three miles distant from the walls of Servius Tullius; though, indeed, other such hypogees are known to have been formed beyond that radius. The name *ad catacumbas* was originally given exclusively to that of St. Sebastian on the Appian al Way; and *catacumbæ* was the title proper to a small oratory behind the extramural basilica of that saint, still extant, built about the middle of the fourth century, for consecration of the spot where (according to legend) the bodies of SS. Peter and Paul reposed for a time after the attempt to remove those revered relics to the East; a sacrilege thwarted (as the legend narrates) by a violent thunderstorm, which detained the emissaries from the East till certain Roman Christians arrived who rescued the bodies, and here gave them interment. To the same spot, it is said, the relics of St. Peter were a second time transported, in the fear of profanation, when a new circus, on the Vatican hill above the Christian cemetery, had been projected by Heliogabalus. This ancient chapel, circular in form, and very inferior in masonry, has a plain altar in its centre, above the deposit in which the Apostles' bodies are said to have lain for a year and seven months, according to some writers (1); for not less than forty years, as

(1) The sepulchre, now covered up, is a square aperture measuring between 6 and 7 feet on each side, and the same in depth; lined in the lower part with marble, and divided into two equal

one chronicler states. Round the walls are several *arcosolia*, apparently made to receive sarcophagi, and once adorned with painted stucco in style of an early mediaeval period, but now barbarously covered with whitewash. Another oratory, at higher level, in form and construction similar, still retains frescoes on a low vaulted roof, evidently of very remote origin, described by Nibby as Greek works: the Saviour in act of blessing; Saints Peter and Paul; the Divine Master, represented in a large head, of solemn expression, within a nimbus; a Crucifixion, not without merit in design, though indeed rude in execution.

The Roman authorities allow all applicants (with the condition of obtaining tickets from the Secretariate of the Cardinal Vicar) to visit such Catacombs as are most interesting, and have hitherto been most worked: *S. Callisto*, *S. Agnese*, *SS. Nereo ed Achilleo*, and *S. Alessandro*. Those of St. Sebastian and St. Pancrace may be entered, without orders, on application at the convents below whose churches they severally extend. On one day in the year, St. Cecilia's festival, the Callixtan Catacombs are opened to the public, and illuminated for the masses now celebrated in three of their chapels, particularly in that where the Virgin Martyr was interred by St. Urban; and where her sepulchre is now adorned with flowers, garlands, palms, and wreaths of evergreen, lit up with lamps under the over-arching vault. In the adja-

compartments by a marble partition. This crypt-chapel is supposed to have been founded by Pope Liberius, and completed under Pope Damasus. The legend of the attempted theft of those Apostolic Relics, in the time of St. Cornelius, is given by Petrarch (Lives of the ancient Pontiffs), with all its romantic embellishments: the sacrilegious Greeks had succeeded in bringing their stolen treasure from the Vatican to this stage on the Via Appia, when voices were heard crying from the penetralia of all the Pagan fanes in the City, « Hasten, Romans, your Gods are being carried away! » both Christians and Heathens took the alarm (an anticipative idea of saint-worship as to the former); rushed in multitudes, overtook the spoilers on this road, and found the bodies thrown into the Catacombs,

cent chapel of the Pontific tombs (where Roman bishops were buried during the III century) an altar like those of basilicas, placed so that the celebrant faces the worshippers, is, this day, in use: and on the altar of St. Cecilia lies a magnificent Missal with a silver relief copied from the antique picture of her in this same chapel—a present expressly for this appropriation from certain dioceses of France. On the last occasion I attended those subterranean rites, the 22nd of November; and received an impression of a pathos and solemnity unequalled by any other religious services in Rome — this commemoration being indeed a genuine link between the Catholicism of the Present and remotest Past. What other system of worship could so touchingly assert its alliance with primitive ages, or the perpetuity of the Faith? Here I saw a priest, just arrived from North America, who, without credentials or introduction, had only to be vested, and succeed to another from France in officiating—example of the truly Catholic in practice. Viewed from an outer oratory, that more spacious chapel of St. Cecilia, illumined by a pendant chandelier as well as by tapers, whilst worshippers knelt in silence, and the richly-robed priest consecrated at a plain altar below those antique pictures dimly traceable on the tufa-walls, was a scene centering all the memories and sanctities of Christianity. Communion was here given amidst wrapt devotion on the part of the worshippers; and I saw one lady, in deep mourning, prostrate on her face at the holiest passages. The other chapels, besides those of the day's celebrations, were alike accessible without guide, and lit up, but so dimly as only just to allow the subjects of their mystic paintings to be distinguished; under which effect it seemed that such symbolic Art gained, rather than losing, the idea being thus intelligible whilst technical deficiencies were thrown into the shade.

Generally speaking, the moral effect of visits to these subterraneans, however fraught with edification, is deeply melancholy; for when we contrast the promise of the glorious

prime, so pure and noble, though announcing itself amid an atmosphere so dark and troublous, with the fulfilment of our own day, with the realities of the religious life around us, how much cause have we to mourn the incurable perversity of man in receiving but to alter and mould to his own purposes, the Truth from Heaven!

The persecutions suffered by Christianity under the Pagan Empire, ten in number, must be considered as entering into the history of the Church in the Catacombs; their periods being thus determinable: *First*—begun under Nero, continuing from A. D. 64 till A. D. 70, date of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; and from this epoch the edict of proscription remained unrepealed, whatever intervals of peace were left to the faithful. *Second*—under Domitian, begun A. D. 90, and continued till 100, with more or less violence, under Nerva. *Third* — under Trajan, from 100 to 116, with a few intervals of repose. *Fourth* — under Hadrian, from 118 to 138; continued till 162, but much less violent, under Antoninus Pius.

*Fifth* — Under Marcus Aurelius, from 162 to 181, and continued under Commodus, but with considerable abatement in subsequent years, till 201.

*Sixth* — under Septimius Severus, from 201 to 214; continued, but at intervals only, and with far less violence, till 257, under Macrinus, Heliogabalus, and Alexander Severus. *Seventh* — begun under Maximinus, 236, and continued at intervals till 250.

*Eighth* — under Decius, from 250 to 252; continued till 257 under Gallus and Volusianus.

*Ninth* — under Valerian, Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus, Numerianus, and Carinus, 253-84; under Diocletian, and Maximianus, Maximin, Maxentius and Licinius (co-reigning), 303-325 — resumed (though under very different circumstances and with other modes of procedure) under Julian, 361-362.

Different writers, however, have drawn up those statistics of the Church's sufferings with other chronologic order, dividing



the persecutions into twelve, at periods thus determined : Under Nero, A. D. 64-68 ; under Domitian, 90-96 ; under Hadrian, 118-129-136 ; under Antoninus Pius, 138-153 ; under M. Aurelius, 161-174 ; under Septimius Severus, 199-211 ; under Maximin, 235-238 ; under Decius, 249-251 ; under Trajan, 97-116 ; under Valerian and Gallienus, 257-260 ; under Aurelian, 272-275 ; under Diocletian and Maximianus, 303-310. That these hostile movements were subject to fluctuations, and at times considerably mitigated, though still legally urged, is evident from the notices of historians, especially those in the *Historiæ Augustæ* ; and among other illustrative documents may be cited the Law of Decius forbidding the torture of the young, *not* on grounds of humanity, but out of regard for corporeal beauty !

The question as to the number of Martyrs has given rise (as I have observed) to many and contradictory theories. If we may look with rational scepticism on the reputed relics, at S. Sebastiano on the Appian Way, of 170,000, *all* said to be buried in the catacombs below that Church ; we cannot but admit the proofs, which, without enabling us to arrive at anything like exact computation, at least suffice for the conclusion that the ranks of that noble army were filled by increasing thousands, as age after age summoned the soldiers of the Cross to the combat. No record tells of the names or numbers of those who suffered under Nero, Domitian, or Trajan (save in few illustrious instances) ; and the total destruction of sacred books and all other documents found in churches, during the persecution under Diocletian, must have thrown back into shades of oblivion all hitherto compiled notices of the sufferers for Faith—as is regretted in pathetic language by Prudentius ( *Peristeph.* 4,74 ). The first step taken by the Church for the preservation of such memorials was the ordinance of St. Clement, third successor to St. Peter, appointing seven Notaries, one for each of the regions into which Rome was divided, for the task of compiling these « Acts » ; and Pope Fabianus (236-50) attached to this body

seven subdeacons, charged to superintend and direct their increasingly onerous duties. From a primitive period (as the writings of St. Cyprian show) were the registers of Martyrs kept in all the churches of the several dioceses where they had suffered; but it seems that, after the most violent persecutions, the acts only of bishops, and others among such victims who had given more than common examples of fortitude or Divine grace, were drawn up in writing; nor were these even published till after approval by the prelates of the dioceses severally (Ruinart, Preface to v. I). To other general proofs may now be added those drawn from Catacomb-monuments; the epitaphs distinguished by numeral signs, at first supposed to be merely the numbers of tombs in their order; two such, given by Boldetti, of the dates 407 and 204, having the ciphers XXX and XL; and another, which Fabretti gives, with the cipher X. A passage in the « Peristephanon » of Prudentius:

Sunt et multa tamen tacitas claudentia tumbas  
Marmora quae solum significant numerum

led a Roman antiquarian, Pietro Visconti, to discover the key of this mystery, interpreting here the undoubted indication of the numbers interred in one grave; and the same poet confirms his own evidence by stating that he had heard of the interment of sixty, whose names were known only to Christ, in the same sepulchre:

Sexaginta illic defossa mole sub una  
Reliquias memini me didicisse hominum  
Quorum solus habet comperta vocabula Christus.

While, if any doubt could remain on this subject, it is dispelled by the still clearer testimony found in other epitaphs, where the term « martyres » immediately precedes or follows the inscribed number—as in one striking example from the Callixtan catacombs (Boldetti, 233), MARCELLA ET CHRISTI MARTYRES CCCCL.

The words of Eusebius, a contemporary, and, in part, an eye-witness of the last great persecution, must be admitted as authentic evidence important in a high degree: « Not merely for a short period, but for several years were these tyrannies carried on continually; and sometimes 10, sometimes 20, 30, 60, or 100 Christians, men, women, and children, were put to death in one day, various tortures being successively used, and renewed, in making them suffer. We ourselves, being at that time in those regions, saw heaps of bodies of persons slain, some beheaded, others burned alive, in a single day ».

The range of Christian Catacombs is not confined exclusively to the Roman neighbourhood. Those at Naples, named after St. Januarius, and formed alike in tufa-stratifications, are of great extent, but have hitherto been little worked or illustrated, though their corridors, and especially one large chapel here, contain many sacred paintings and symbolic ornaments, engravings from some of which are given by Agincourt, who ascribes the more remarkable among these pictures to Greek artists of periods earlier than the IX century—not undertaking farther to determine date. More extensive, and still less known or illustrated, are the Catacombs of Syracuse, which communicate with, or diverge from, several Churches both in the city and extramural: the most spacious and easily permeable under S. Giovanni beyond the walls. In their aggregate these have never yet been explored; and among their more valuable contents, the antique vases, found here from time to time, have been mostly removed, many to pass into the possession of the Duke Bonanni, as he tells us in his work, *Antiche Siracuse* (1717). Here also have been discovered numerous coins, and Greek inscriptions; but not (that I can ascertain) any Christian paintings of remarkable character. These are probably the vastest in extent among all subterraneans ever applied to sacred purposes by the Church; and are excavated entirely in the living rock, at different periods, and, as assumed, during the more

flourishing epochs of the once great Sicilian capital—not therefore of Christian origin, as is indeed apparent from the Pagan subjects of some designs, representing funeral ceremonies, rudely scratched on their walls. Throughout their whole extent, these hypogees show characteristics totally different from the Roman; and are described as resembling a complete subterranean city, with streets, rectilinear or curving, several of which converge at open spaces, whence is descent to lower stories; or at spacious circular chambers, some 24 feet in diameter, under domical roofs pierced by orifices for giving light. The corridors are lined with arched recesses, divided into parallel tombs by stone partitions; but many of the deposits are sarcophagi, placed isolate on the ground, or at different heights along the rock-walls. Though generally, no doubt, formed anterior to Christianity, characteristics of the first centuries of our era are apparent in the barbaric attempts at architectural detail in some chambers (perhaps used for worship); and still more clearly in the sacred symbols on certain tombs. But, in other aspects, the singularities of formation are such as to have led antiquarians to conjecture different races as the authors, and different epochs for the date of these extraordinary works. The artist traveller, Houel, who explored to considerable extent, and gives the fullest report I have met with, tells that he found the corridors throughout lighted by shafts communicating with the open air; but that at many points progress was impeded by the falling-in of the scaly rock. When at Syracuse, before the late political changes, I could find no *Cicerone* capable of acting as guide to any extent, or giving any desirable information, in these mysterious subterraneans. That such retreats were early required amid the perils of the primitive local Church, we may infer from the religious history of this Island. We know that martyrs suffered under Nero; that the Decian persecution raged with utmost violence, giving occasion to the self-sacrifice of many heroic witnesses, in Sicily; and the tradition seems credible that it was in that range of



more spacious corridors below the S. Giovanni church the faithful of Syracuse used to take refuge from the persecuting storm ; that it was there one of their first bishops, St. Mar-  
cian, died a martyr's death. Pagan worship is believed to have been suppressed, or at least its principle temples for ever closed, in Sicily<sup>a</sup>, under the reign of Honorius (1).

(1) For the history of Persecutions, v. Ruinart, « Acta sincera ». Tillemont ; and Milman, « History of Christianity ». For the Catacombs and primitive Art (besides the works above-cited), Gerbet, « Esquisse de Rome Chrétienne » ; Gournerie, « Rome Chrétienne » ; Martigny, « Diction. des Antiq. Chrétiennes » ; Didron, « Iconographie » ; Guénebault, « Diction. Iconog » ; Houel, « Voyage Pittoresque d. Isles de Sicile » ec. Raoul Rochette, « Catacombs de Rome » ; Pelliccia, « Christ. Eccles. Politia » ; Cantù, « Storia Universale ». Appendix on Archaeology.

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### III.

#### **The first Christian Emperors.**

THE story of progress and thought in the Christian life of the IV century supplies an inexhaustible subject for investigation and suggestive studies. It is the energy of a new principle, the power of absorbing and transmuting, the awakening to consciousness of higher destinies that now become characteristic features of the time, vindicating for the Church her vocation as the world's regenerator. Christianity may be said to have passed, mainly in this, though partially in earlier periods, through that stage which transformed her from an abstract religion cherished by individual belief into an Institution under hierarchic government, regulated by law, directed by a definite code, and presided over by authorities with the recognized right to determine in respect to doctrines, morals, and public worship. The high standing of the intellect that now devoted it-self to the worship of the Cross, and the powers enlisted in that service, begin to be more strikingly represented by such men as St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, St. Athanasius, the philosopher Lactantius, and the poet Prudentius. Most of those great memories are associated in some manner with sites in Rome: thus the Benedictine church of *S. Ambrogio*, near the Octavian Portico, recalls to us that saintly Bishop of Milan, whose earliest years were spent at his father's house

on this spot: the church of the orthodox Greeks (*Via Babuino*) bears the name of Athanasius, who twice visited this City during his long vehement contest with the Arian heretics, and *probably* resided where that temple now stands. *S. Maria in Cosmedin* is traditionally connected with the name of Augustine, who, before his conversion and baptism, is said (but by vague legend indeed) to have taught Rhetoric at a public academy among the vast ruins of the Pagan fane where this basilica eventually arose: and *S. Girolamo della Carita* is dedicated to that ascetic theologian—one of the Four Doctors of the Latin Church — who, whilst engaged as secretary to Pope Damasus (354-7), resided in the house of a pious widow, Paula, which finally became a spacious church, rebuilt, as it now stands, in 1660, at present served by Oratorians, and once enriched by Domenichino's masterpiece, the « Last Communion » of that Saint.

Besides a triumphal arch adorned with spoils from another of a far superior art-epoch, little remains among Rome's antiquities of the numerous edifices that owed their foundation to Constantine; and the mighty events of this period must be read rather on the page of history, than on architectural or sculptured surfaces. Yet the few extant monuments at Rome associated with the first Christian Emperors, are interesting, and in their present state picturesque. At *Santa Croce in Gerusalemme* we may observe the ancient masonry, with wide arches now built up in lateral walls, that displays the characteristics of the IV century, though its cornice with marble brackets must have been added in the XII; and the conjecture that this basilica was formed in the *Praetorium*, or Judgment-hall of the Sessorian palace, seems admissible. In the pleasant gardens of the adjacent Cistercian monastery, stands the conspicuous ruin of a vast hall terminating in an apse, and supported in the rear by large buttresses—the subject of much antiquarian dispute, and popularly known to this day as the « Temple of Venus and Cupid », but on better grounds assumed to be a hall of state, or basilica (in the

non-ecclesiastic sense), belonging to the same imperial palace, the favourite residence of Heliogabalus and Alexander Severus; in that picturesquely isolated ruin one detail at least, the massive brick buttresses with squared blocks of travertine set at intervals into their masonry, having quite the character of the Constantinian period. The German theory assumes this edifice to be the Nymphaeum, referred in the *Notitiae* to Alexander Severus, and built near the Castrense amphitheatre, whose ruins are on the same monastic premises; and the stone-work of the former building having been in part removed for the tasteless façade of S. Croce, in the last century, its decay has become more absolute through fault of its owners. Where a boundary is formed to these gardens by the walls of Honorius, a series of vaulted chambers in two stories, against which those fortifications have been raised, may be traced in ruins to considerable extent, and referred to the same palace — whose name, *Sessorian*, probably derives from «sedere» in the sense of residence. An affecting and impressive scene is that monastic garden with its records of eventful ages!

The church dedicate to the brother Martyrs, John and Paul, stands on the site of their own house on the Coelian Hill, where they suffered by decapitation, and were secretly buried within the same walls under the apostate Emperor Julian. To these two brothers, both eunuchs attached to the court of Constantine, a church was raised in the IV century by Pammachius, a patrician who had become a monk; and the same building was restored, first by Pope Symmachus in the V century, afterwards, at different periods, by Cardinals who took their title in the sacred College from it — among others, the Cardinal who added the present portico in the time of the English Pope, Adrian IV. It is probable that the house in which those brothers suffered was no other than the imperial palace on the Coelian, where Commodus resided; and in fact, on the side of the church overlooking the ascent to the height occupied by the adjacent convent,



we distinguish both the fine Roman brickwork of the first century, and that of the IV—the latter very inferior—in which the main body of this building is formed. The numerous constructive arches, built of the usual large Roman tiles, and the arched windows, alike closed, afford proof how different was the structure of the IV and V centuries from the *SS. Giovanni e Paolo* of the present time; but it is interesting to trace even through disfigurements the epoch of Constantine at Rome.

The rotunda on the Nomentan Way, known as *S. Costanza*, was perhaps a Baptistery as well as the sepulchral chapel of the daughters of Constantine, Constantia and Helen, mentioned by Marcellinus; and the inferior style of this building confirms the assumption as to its period. The Mausoleum was dedicated for worship by Alexander IV in the latter half of the XIII century; and, in the XVII, reduced to its present more modern form by much inappropriate alteration. This edifice forms a rotunda, 73 feet in diameter, surrounded by a vaulted aisle, or corridor, with arcades supported by 24 coupled columns of granite, their capitals of the composite Roman order: with attic, cupola, and laterally, three tribunes, or apses, probably an addition made when the tomb was converted into a church. On its aisle-vaults is a series of mosaics, all unfortunately painted over in a pseudo-restoration, 1836, but still interesting as examples of early Christian art: the subjects different in the several compartments: some of regular geometric design, like a pattern for carpetwork; others of arabesque, with foliage and fruit, birds, animals, ornamental tracery, and winged children, like those genii of the Seasons seen both in Pagan and early Christian art; also groups engaged in the vintage, treading the grapes, driving waggons of fruit, drawn by oxen, to the wine—press. Of larger scale are a few heads, the character of which is Bacchic; the figures of animals and birds—oxen, geese, peacocks, doves, etc. being generally true to nature, and in details graceful. Within one compartment is introduced, recurring repeatedly

in an ornamental pattern, the figure of the Cross, which alone suffices refute the idea once admitted by antiquarians, concluding from the subjects of other mosaics on these vaults, that the edifice had been originally a temple of Bacchus. The mosaics that once adorned that cupola, of the same date with those on the aisle—vaulting, are now only known through engravings of the last extant remnant (v. Ciampini's work) — their subjects exclusively and obviously Pagan: winged Genii rowing boats and fishing in a river, Cariatides, figures of Satyrs and Bacchantes, panthers, and ideal groups differently occupied, one being assembled before a temple with the statue of its deity—showing the influences of that classic art which had not yet given place to a more exalted range of creations even in edifices of sacred character. Similar in masonry, but less spared by time, and now reduced to a picturesque ruin, is the building on the Labican Way, about two miles from the *Porta Maggiore*, destined by Constantine for the twofold purpose of a Mausoleum to his mother Helena, and a church dedicated to the Martyrs SS. Marcellinus and Peter, — a priest and an exorcist who suffered under Diocletian; which structure restored by Honorius I in 625, had fallen into such a state of decay before the IX century, that it was with difficulty a second restoration, ordered by Nicholas I, in 858, could be effected. It is a rotunda, in the brickwork masonry of which we observe the curious use of earthen vessels (an expedient peculiar to the worst period of ancient Roman architecture); and hence its modern name, *Tor Pignattara*; once roofed over by a depressed cupola, having a portico with a Greek pediment in front, the whole elevated rose on a stylobate, with ascent by steps. Within late years it has been repaired by the Lateran Chapter, who own the parish church (*SS. Pietro e Marcellino*) built in the XVII century within its ancient walls—an addition injurious to the venerable aspect of this ruin, that rises like a great shattered tower conspicuous on the Campagna. Around this Mausoleum sprung up, even so early as the latter half of the IV century,

first a village, and eventually a town, which became a bishopric, the first mentioned Prelate of whose See was among those assembled in a Roman Council, A. D. 365; *Subaugusta*, (as was named this city) being long a place of pilgrimage where the devout flocked to the tomb of the sainted Empress; but with the lapse of ages this site became so deserted that Innocent II bought it, in 1193, to bestow what was then probably a mere tenantless demesne on the Lateran Chapter. St. Helena's body was transferred by Anastasius III, about 1153, to an altar under a marble cupola at Aracoeli, on the Capitol; and solitude now extends, with that solemn tone characteristic of Rome's Campagna, round the ruined Mausoleum. Together with these sepulchral chapels of Helena and Constantia, we may consider two examples of the sculpture of the same period, that alike exhibit the marks of deep decline and the influence of classic ideas over an art just pressed into the service of Christianity. The porphyry sarcophagi of the mother and daughter, both transferred in the last century to the Vatican Museum, are almost the only specimens of Roman sculpture in that most unyielding material. That of St. Helena displays figures, in high relief, of mounted warriors and chained captives, the latter wearing the Phrygian cap and trousers; also busts, in similar relief, of the Empress wearing a tiara, and the Emperor with a laurel crown. That of Constantia is adorned with low reliefs even inferior to the former, representing children engaged in the vintage, peacocks, lambs, and Bacchic masks—except which subjects these sculptures may indeed bear interpretation in Christian sense, like other vintage-scenes so often represented, though by no means obviously Christian in significance. Turning to other monuments of this century, in Rome, we find little indeed to notice save the characteristics of rapid decay—poverty in idea and coarseness in execution; such as alike distinguish the statues of Constantine and his eldest son, now on the balustrade above the stairs ascending the Capitol; the other colossal figure of the same Emperor in the atrium of the Lateran

(all found among the ruins of the Constantinian Thermae on the Quirinal); also the busts of Diocletian, Constantius Chlorus, Julian, and the usurper Magnus Decentius; in the Capitoline Museum — the first of some merit, the last of these four presenting the very lowest stage, the second childhood of fallen Art. Well known is the history of that beautiful arch, adorned with borrowed wealth, and on which the reliefs executed in honour of Constantine's victories so deplorably contrast with those noble sculptures illustrative of Trajan's campaigns, public works, and private life. This monument has been lately made the subject of minute inspection by De Rossi, who, after closely examining its remarkable epigraph, so different from the lapidary style of Paganism, was led to the rejection of a favourite theory as to one of the phrases introduced, allusive to the triumph over Maxentius and the restoration of public peace — *Instinctu Divinitatis* — obviously Christian, or at least monotheistic in sense, and long assumed to have been substituted for some other words, Pagan in import, after the Emperor had declared, more distinctly and officially, his adherence to Christian faith. Such was the conjecture of Venuti, Nardini, and Nibby; and Cardinal Mai (*Script. Vet.*, t. V) supposes the original may have been, *Dii faventibus*, dictated by a Pagan Senate, but *immediately* afterwards altered by the Emperor's desire.

The German Archaeologic Institute at Rome has published the report of an experienced epigraphist, who, after close examination, inferred from the traces of nails for fastening the bronze letters, that the original words may have been, *Nutu Jovis Optimi Maximi*. But De Rossi has refuted this, stating his conviction, based alike on investigation, that the marble surface bears no marks of erasure, or of cavities not corresponding with the actual letters; his inference being that the formula, *Instinctu Divinitatis*, was that originally dictated by the Senate, *not* with intent to recognize any Christian principle, but in an idea natural however unsanctioned, of transaction between the new and old Religion. This entire



arch (says De Rossi) « is an accumulation of spoils from earlier monuments, not only in its bas-reliefs and statues, but the very stones of which it is constructed » — singular example of the incapacity and sterility into which the Roman genius had now fallen ! As to the date of its erection—315, 316, and 326 A. D. have been severally conjectured ; by Tillemont and other authorities, the first, the year, namely, that coincided with the *decennalia*, or festival for the first decade of the reign of Constantine.

In 4650 was reopened, beneath the Carmelite church, *SS Martino e Silvestro*, on the Esquiline Hill, the long-forgotten oratory formed (according to Anastasius) by Sylvester I among the halls of Trajan's *Thermae*—or, more probably, in an antique palace adjacent to those imperial baths—and called by Christian writers « *Titulus Equitii* », from the name of a Roman priest then proprietor of the ground. Now a gloomy, time-worn, and sepulchral subterranean, this structure is in form an extensive quadrangle, under a high-hung vault, divided into four aisles by massive square piers ; the central bay of one aisle adorned with a large red cross, painted as if studded with gems ; and ranged around this, four books, each within a nimbus, earliest symbolism to represent the Evangelists. Among the few much-faded and dim-seen frescoes on these dusky walls, are figures of the Saviour between SS. Peter and Paul, besides other Saints, each crowned by a large nimbus. About A. D. 500 was built a more important church by Pope Symmachus, above this primitive one ; and the later edifice, first renewed in the IX century by Sergius II and Leo IV, gradually lost its antique character through successive modernizing works,—the last in 1650.

It is impossible to assign any exact date to such an event as the public profession of Christianity by Constantine — the imperial neophyte who presided at the Nicene Council, and interposed in the gravest transactions of the Church whilst himself unbaptized ; and it seems just to infer, with the learned Beugnot (*Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme*), that

the philosophic deism imbibed by this Emperor from his father, continued to be his only individual religion for years after his triumph over the last Pagan who ruled at Rome. Zosimus fixes the date of his defection from the national worship at A. D. 326, shortly after the mysterious deaths of his eldest son Crispus and perhaps calumniated wife, Fausta (a dark story of domestic crime, like that of Phœdra and Hippolytus, or the Parisina of Ferrara); and it seems not improbable that the powerful motives of remorse may have immediately led him to seek consolation, or absolution, from the Christian priesthood, after having burdened his conscience not only with the violent deaths of his wife and child, but also with the political murder of his colleague and brother-in-law, Licinius (to whom he had promised life on the submission of that defeated rival), and of Licinius's innocent child, his own nephew. But though the very equivocal procedure of this unscrupulous convert is rendered more inexplicable by the contradictory reports of historians, panegyrist and opponent, there can be no doubt that he finally became a sincere Christian, long before the Baptism delayed, with pernicious example, till he found himself on his deathbed.

Constantine crossed the Alps for that memorable campaign against the fierce and licentious tyrant, Maxentius, in the Spring of the year 312; and in rapid succession of brilliant victories, took the town of Susa, defeated the opposing forces at Turin, Brescia, Verona; and on the 28th October fought that eventful battle on the Tiber-shores, at the *Saxa Rubra* (eight miles distant from Rome), which decided, so far as human means can be said to have done so, the contest between Pagan and Christian Empire. It was while traversing Gaul on this march that he is said to have seen, shortly after mid-day, the appearance of a luminous cross in air inscribed with the words: *In hoc signo vinces* — his whole army being alike witness of this portent, as to which we have the authority of Eusebius, who states himself to have received the narration from Constantine in person: but neither time nor

place can be exactly determined for this vision : and in the middle ages a church arose on Monte Mario, intended to commemorate the fact that there Constantine had stood when the fiery cross shone upon his gaze (1). On the ensuing night he is said to have seen a vision of the Saviour bearing the same symbol, and commanding him to adopt it henceforth as the standard of the Roman armies.

Consequently appeared a new and sacred sign, in place of the Imperial Eagle : the *Labarum* (earliest representations of which are seen on Christian sarcophagi, now at the Lateran Museum), consisting of a gilt pole (*hasta*), with a transverse beam (*antenna*) at the upper part, thus to present the form of the cross ; and on the summit, a leafy crown of gold and gems, encircling the monogram formed by the first two letters of the holy name, X. P. ; beneath, suspended to the *antenna*, a banner of purple tissue, studded with gems, and embroidered with the heads of the Emperor and his sons in gold. A guard, consisting of 50 soldiers distinguished in arms, and called *draconarii* (from the Dragon, one of the Pagan symbols on Rome's standards), was appointed for the custody of this *vexillum* ; and rumour adds that no

(1) Impartial historians can no longer admit the miraculous in this incident ; and even Eusebius, the only authority of weight, is silent on the subject in his Ecclesiastical History. De Broglie cites all the witnesses in its favour : and Fabricius (« Bibliotheca Graeca, V, 6 ») has treated it with exhaustive investigation : the latter adopting the theory in which Neander, Manso, Milman, and many others concur, namely, that some meteoric phaenomenon was presented to the view, and exaggerated by the imagination of Constantine. Prudentius tells us that not only the resplendent *Labarum*, but the shields and helms of the Roman army were thenceforth signed with the holy monogram — as still seen on those accoutrements in Byzantine coinage :

Christus purpureum, gemmanti textus in auro,  
Signabat labarum, clypeorum insignia Christus  
Scripserat : ardebat summis crux addita cristis.

(In Symmach. v. 482.)

one bearing it in battle was ever slain ! Henceforth the Labarum appears on the coinage of the Emperors of the East, though not always with the same details, sometimes the monogram being on the banner instead of within the golden wreath, or the Greek words, « Through this conquer », substituted for the imperial effigy. The identical standard of Constantine is said to have been kept in the palace at Constantinople till the IX century. We are told by Eusebius that, soon after his triumphal entrance into Rome, this Emperor caused his statue to be erected on a public place, holding a cross formed by two spears, with an epigraph to the effect that « with this life-giving sign he had freed Rome from the yoke of tyranny, restored liberty to the Senate and People, and re-established the City in her ancient splendour » — but such a statement from a Greek writer, who elsewhere shows himself little acquainted with Roman localities, seems insufficient against the aggregate evidence that shows Constantine's policy towards the Christian Religion in a light irreconcilable with the intent of such a monumental trophy; for it is obvious this Emperor's aim was not the overthrow of the national worship, but merely the emancipation of the Christian Church, whilst he himself was satisfied to remain aloof from any positive religious engagement. Criticism alike rejects the story of his baptism in Rome by the hand of St. Sylvester, and the claims of the octagonal edifice at the Lateran to be the actual Baptistry raised by Constantine for that rite, though such error is perpetuated to this day in the inscription on the basement of the obelisk that stands before the same basilica : — *Constantinus per Crucem Victor a S. Silvestro Hic Baptizatus Crucis Gloriam Propagavit* (1). Shortly

(1) Baronius argues in support of the statement in this legend as to the Baptism of Constantine, and his miraculous healing from leprosy through means of the rite, in the year 324; but Eusebius. Bishop of Cesarea, a contemporary and eye-witness, describes that Baptism as taking place when the Emperor lay on his deathbed, at a castle near Nicomedia in Bithynia, 337; Constantine being therefore



after the victory over Maxentius were issued two edicts by the jointly-reigning Emperors, Constantine and Licinius, that first prepared the way for the great changes in the Church's life; one of these documents being now lost; the other (published at Milan, 313) importing a full concession of freedom and toleration to the Christians, but without any implied assurance that either of those rulers had embraced their faith: — « *Hac ordinanda esse credidimus, ut daremus et Christianis et omnibus liberam potestatem sequendi religionem quam quisque voluisset, quod quidem Divinitas in se de coelesti nobis atque omnibus qui sub potestate nostra sunt constituti placata ac propitia possit existere* ».

In the same year Constantine, addressing the Proconsul of Africa, ordered that the Christian priests should be exempt from all municipal duties, lest (he adds) « they might thus be withdrawn from the service of the Divinity, which would be a species of sacrilege ». — In 319 he passed laws of extreme severity against the practices of divination, prohibiting the *haruspex*, on pain of being burned alive, from officiating in the private house of any citizen; threatening with confiscation and exile all who should have recourse in private to such impostors. In 330 he ordered three temples, two of Venus, and one of Esculapius, in Syria and Cilicia, to be shut on account of their having become notorious haunts of legalized vice; but it is certain that two of those fanes were soon re-opened—if ever closed according to this edict.

Meantime this reforming Emperor, though he abstained from offering sacrifice, and refused ceremonially to ascend the Capitol on solemn days for rendering homage to Jupiter amidst his army and Senate, did not scruple to assume the robes and the title of « Pontifex Maximus »; and though in 344 he offend-

sixty-three years of age when formally received into the Church, after the lapse of 25 years since he had first extended favours to Christianity. Not the less was his memory deified by the Roman Senate; and the title *divus*, the formula *devotus numini ejus* were alike bestowed on him as on his Pagan predecessors.

ed the public feeling at Rome by suppressing the Secular Games (deemed essential to the welfare of Empire), nevertheless sanctioned the *public* consultation of Haruspices; and gave assurance to his subjects, in emphatic terms, of his intention to leave full liberty for the belief and observances of Paganism (1) A law of 321 enforced on all citizens, on judges, corporations, and the inhabitants of towns generally, the duty of abstaining from all business on Sundays, the acts of emancipation and enfranchisement of slaves excepted. It does not appear indeed that in this rescript was aimed the observance of a Christian festival, no reference in this sense being included; it was as the Day of the Sun that the first in the week was declared sacred, and the solar worship, a peculiar feature of the new Paganism, might have been celebrated without any Christian idea attaching to it. As to slavery, the new legislation recognized the broad line of demarcation between the two classes, bond and free, however it benefited the condition of the former: it deprived the master of arbitrary power over life and death; it punished as homicide the death of a slave under torture, or any excessively severe castigation, but *not* if the victim died under *moderate* chastisement. The marriage of a free woman with a slave was punished with death; seduction by the slave in his master's family, with burning alive; and for the crime of child-stealing in order to sell into slavery, the penalty, retaining all the barbarism of old Roman manners, was exposure in the amphitheatre, either to be devoured by wild beasts or for the gladiatorial combat! But the laws that affected domestic morality were animated by a worthier spirit: the sanctity of marriage was rehabilitated in so far that infidelity was made a capital crime, and legal separation allowed on the suit of the wife for three offences alone in the husband—

(1) In a decree of 319 he addresses the Roman people in such terms as these: « Adite aras pnblicas atque delubra, et consuetudinis vestrae celebrate solemnia: nec enim prohibemus praeterita » « usurpationis officia libera luce tractari ».

homicide, poisoning, and violation of sepulchres. The ancient statutes against celibacy were removed, but not those that deprived the childless married man of the full right to inheritances; and all who had taken the religious vow of celibacy were now privileged, alike with the Vestal virgins, to make their wills even before the legal age—a law leading us to infer the frequency of such engagements at this epoch. It is, indeed, in the numerous edicts of Constantine, providing for public charities and the relief of suffering, that his cordial adherence to the ethics, at least, of the Gospel, stands out most clearly; and the infusion of new principles into social life, natural result of the ascendancy secured to the religion of the Cross, becomes most luminously evident: the helpless poor were to be nourished out of the public granaries; the children of destitute parents were to be supported at the expense of the State; those left exposed, and consequently sold into slavery, to be ransomed and set free: creditors were no longer allowed to deprive debtors of their servants, or of such cattle as were required for agricultural labours; all aggrieved persons were invited to appeal to the sovereign against abuses on the part of his ministers or courtiers; the cruel usage of branding with hot iron those criminals condemned to work in mines or combat as gladiators, was abolished; so also the punishment of death by the cross (a deeply significant measure; but other severe penalties were retained; and (strange to say) the murderous spectacles of the amphitheatre were not finally put down till well-nigh another century had passed! Owners of slaves were empowered to emancipate them by a simple, unconditional act, performed in any church in presence of the bishop, or other local Clergy; various humane regulations were adopted for the relief of prisoners, and expeditious procedure of tribunals; and among decrees immediately affecting the ecclesiastical body, were those granting the privilege to clerics for accepting donations and bequests; to the bishops generally for arbitrating in judicial causes. If, on one hand, Constantine's

policy in religious interests may appear equivocal or vacillating, and his private life unworthy of his profession, he gave at least the example of magnanimous principle and high appreciation of the faith eventually embraced by him, in assigning to the Church a sphere of freedom guaranteed for her action by purely moral means on human intelligence; while keeping strictly aloof from the monstrous pretension, so fatally maintained by many among his successors, of forcing religious compliance by penal law; and it is an impressive lesson that the story of Christianity under Constantine presents: the Church passing through the phase of toleration in progress towards attaining her greatest triumphs.

It appears that the first place of Christian worship founded by Constantine was the Church in the imperial palace, subsequently amplified into the patriarchal basilica called Lateran, from the name of that residence; and his bestowal of that palace itself upon the Pope was certainly a signal proof how he esteemed the dignified character of the Roman Bishop. The magnificent mansion of the Lateran family, confiscated with all their estates by Nero, after Plautius Lateranus had been put to death for imputed conspiracy against that tyrant, had thenceforth become an imperial residence; and a portion of its vast buildings had been given by Maximianus to his daughter Fausta, the second wife of Constantine. This part, *domus Faustae*, the Emperor is said to have presented to Pope Melchiades on occasion of the Council convoked, in 313, against the schism of the Donatists; and tradition adds that, in 324, after his supposed baptism in a chamber of this palace, subsequently converted into the Baptistery still extant, the Emperor conferred the entire edifice, with its Basilica, upon St. Sylvester, — a report, however, rejected by critical historians, though Baronius, with his usual readiness to admit mere legend, does not hesitate to accept it. The consecration of that primitive cathedral, first dedicate to the Saviour, and probably of much smaller dimensions than the actual church, took place on



the 9th November, 324, a day thence passed into general observance among Catholic festivals (1). It was at this solemnity, while Sylvester officiated before Constantine, that a vision of the Redeemer Himself, looking down upon the multitude, became manifest in the apse beyond the high altar, according to the poetic legend of that Pope. And there still looks forth from the apse a colossal mosaic head of the Divine Being, like a mysterious Presence dominating over the sacred scene, with strongly marked features, large dark eyes, the hair and beard also dark, the expression stern and mournfully earnest—a work referrible, without doubt, to the IV century, having been rescued from the conflagrations and other vicissitudes this church has so often suffered from, and eventually associated with the large mosaic group of the XIII century) that fills the lower part of the apsidal vaulting. Crescimbeni (see his history of this Basilica) points out the difference of material in this earlier, as compared with the later specimens of mosaic art; and the legend of the preternatural appearance is represented, with all other acts in that poetic story of Constantine and St. Sylvester, in several modern frescoes on the attic of this Church's transepts (2). It is not quite certain whether it was in the same year 324, or 319, that this Emperor complied with the suggestion of

(1) The Lateran Basilica of Constantine is represented in a small rude bas-relief, now seen in a corridor of this church's sacristy, found (1751) below a neighbouring convent-church, SS. Pietro e Marcellino; this sculpture showing the façade as seen from beyond the adjacent city-walls, with the Porta Asinaria (now closed in front; conveying, indeed, no idea of the majestic or characteristic in the architecture of the long flat-roofed temple, with colonnade-portico, and apse, lit by round-arched windows, placed on one side, instead of being, as probably was the real plan, at one extremity. No church in Rome has been spoilt more deplorably by modern disfigurements than this pre-eminent Cathedral.

(2) The following is the bona fide statement of a living Roman writer: « The Pontiff solemnly consecrated it » (the Lateran) « on

the Pope by laying the foundations for Rome's greatest basilica; assisting at the works with his own hands on that occasion; divested of diadem and imperial mantle, and, clad (as the legend states) in the white robes of a newly-baptized neophyte, spade in hand, turning up the earth as he traced the plan upon the Vatican declivity, and carried away on his shoulders twelve loads of soil, intending, in this number, to do honour to the Apostles. It has been inferred (Bunsen, *Beschreibung*) that the original tomb of St Peter was not where that high altar and splendid « confessional » now stand above the Apostle's relics, but at some short distance hence, under the oratory raised by Anacletus, and (as is unquestionably more probable) *beyond* instead of *within* the limits of that Neronian Circus, site of so many terrific martyrdoms. Anastasius tells us, indeed, that the Apostle's body was exhumed by Constantine's order to be reinterred under the altar, laid in a shrine of silver, within an outer sarcophagus of gilt bronze, measuring five feet in breadth and length, on which was set a golden cross 130 lbs in weight. Above this arose the high altar plated first with silver, afterwards with gold, and a choir whose pavement was silver; golden statues of the Saviour and several Apostles guarding the entrance into that most gorgeous sanctuary, where silver and gold lamps were perpetually burning. The nave and four aisles were divided by eighty-six marble pillars, supporting architraves; an atrium, and *paradisus*, or quadrangular portico, extending in front — the measurements of this church's interior, 313 by 210 feet. Though with its pomps, art-adornments, and so many sacred associations entitling it to supreme reverence, the whole edifice has passed away, save the mere pavement of what has now become one section only in a crypt, we may still feel our sense for the *religio loci* enhanced by the assurance of the 9th November, in honour of the Saviour, whose image, similar to that in mosaic preserved intact through so many conflagrations, was on this occasion seen miraculously to appear before the Roman people ». Moroni, *Dizionario d'erudizione ecclesiastica*.

ance that there, amidst the dazzling splendours of the «confessional» due to Paul V, exists to this day unaltered the identical tomb of the Apostle, where his relics were enshrined in silver and bronze by Constantine. The usage long prevailed of letting down handkerchiefs or mantles to touch the sacred sarcophagus; and around the altar above it was a grating (*transenna*), opened at one side by a small window (*jugulum*), through which the *pallia*, or *brandea*, were passed, being first carefully weighed; then, after an interval spent in fasting and prayer by the suppliant, withdrawn from the tomb, to be again weighed, in the belief that the Divine favour was infallibly signified through the increased heaviness of the garment left in such contact! And another practice, mentioned by St. Gregory of Tours, was the offering of golden keys for the grated door of this sepulchre, and taking away, instead, those previously in use, to the touch of which were ascribed miraculously healing virtues!

The other churches founded by Constantine in Rome are all referred by tradition to the same year 324. St. Paul's on the Ostian Way was consecrated by St. Sylvester, and enriched by the Emperor (besides many other donations) with the silver sarcophagus surmounted by a golden cross, 150 lbs in weight, where the body of that Apostle was laid — or, according to other tradition, the *half* of the relics of both the chief Apostles deposited, the other half of each body being at St. Peter's. It is probable the original church on the Ostian Way was comparatively small, and far surpassed in scale by that founded by Theodosius, which, begun in 386 under superintendence of the Roman Prefect, was completed under Honorius, about 395, as we read in the verses over its chancel-arch:

Theodosius coepit, perfecit Honorius aulam  
 Doctoris mundi sacratam corpore Pauli.

The other basilicas, — that of St. Laurence on the Tiburtine Way, St. Agnes on the Nomentan Way, *S. Croce in Gerusa-*

*lemme*, and SS. Peter and Marcellinus on the Labican Way (also the mausoleum of St. Helen) may without doubt be ascribed to the same imperial founder; though not so that of SS. *Apostoli*, erroneously associated with his name, which was built by Pope Pelagius in the VI century. The revenues and wealth of precious offerings, sacred vessels, metallic sculptures etc., bestowed on these new churches by Constantine is truly astonishing as reported in the catalogue given by Anastasius; but we may ask whether that chronicler of the IX century had himself any other than the basis of tradition to rely upon?—remembering that, prior to his day, almost the whole aggregate of this wealth, in moveables at least, had been stolen from the principal basilicas by the Saracens. According to that writer the gold and silver objects bestowed on the Lateran alone would have been equivalent to 68,000 sterling; and the property settled on the same church would have yielded more than L. 40,000 per annum. Agincourt calculates that the entire value of these donations, during the pontificate of St. Sylvester alone, must have exceeded what Solomon bestowed on the Jerusalem Temple. Among those for ceremonial use were all the perfumes named in the Scriptures, — balsam, cinnamon, spikenard, saffron etc., for burning in the sanctuary; and a tribute of 420 lbs of frankincense annually, was among possessions secured to the Lateran. Among sacred buildings interestingly associated with the legends and religious ideas of the IV century, are that Basilica « of the Cross », and the portico containing the *Scala Santa*. Helena, the daughter of a British prince and the mother of Constantine, who, as Eusebius tells us, became a Christian soon after the victory of her son, undertook, when past her eightieth year, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the object of discovering the true Cross, after having communicated to the bishop, Macarius, her desire to erect a church on the site of the Redeemer's sufferings. After the temple of Venus and the statue of Jupiter, raised by the Romans on Calvary, had been overthrown, the excavations, carried out



under her superintendence, led to the finding of even more than the pious princess had sought: the Holy Sepulchre, the other Instruments of the Passion, and three crosses, among which latter the identity of the one sought was proved, on the suggestion of Macarius, by miracle: a female, who lay at the point of death, being brought to the spot, touched by it, and immediately restored to health! A portion of this most precious Relic was sent at once to Constantinople; another to Rome; but the greater part was consigned by Helen to Macarius, this becoming the principal treasure of the new church founded by her over the Holy Sepulchre. It is said that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, whom she had consulted before instituting the research, informed her of the ancient Jewish usage of burying near the spot where criminals had been interred, whatever implements had been used to inflict death; and as to details of that discovery, now commemorated by the Church as the « Invention of the Cross », we have the full narrative given by St. Cyril, an eye-witness, who became bishop of Jerusalem twenty-five years subsequently. The Roman Basilica said to have been founded expressly as the shrine for that relic, has been known by the name « Heleniana », as well as by that of « Sessorian »; and the chapel of St. Helena, at a lower level than the church itself, is built over soil brought from Calvary, together with those other treasures. In the vault of the terminating apse was discovered, in 4492, a leaden coffer with three seals, and an inscription near, containing a portion of the title of the Cross, with the imperfect letters of the words: JESUS NAZARENE KING, — since that year annually exposed on the festival of the « Invention », on the fourth Sunday in Lent, and on Good Friday; a mitred Abbot displaying this and other Relics from a balcony in the transept, the description of each object being chanted by an assistant; and when the bell sounds to announce that deemed holiest, while all the multitude kneel in silence, a supernatural awe seems the spirit of the thrilling scene.

Reason may condemn, but feeling cannot resist the claim to reverential sympathy in the spectacle daily presented in that building that now contains the *Scala Santa*—regarded as the staircase of thirty steps from the palace of Pilate, several times ascended and descended by the Saviour; and said to have been found by St. Helena, together with three columns and two gates of the same building, sent by her to Rome, and placed by St. Sylvester in the portico of the Lateran palace. Numerous indulgences have been granted by different Popes to those who ascend it with prayer at each step. Whilst kneeling upon these stairs public penance used to be performed in the days of the Church's more rigorous discipline; as the saintly matron Fabiola there appeared a penitent before the public gaze, in sackcloth and ashes (A. D. 390). The staircase was ruined by earthquake in 897; but soon restored, and re-erected near the gates of the Lateran church; and when Sixtus V ordered the demolition of the ancient Papal palace, it was again removed to the place now occupied, a separate building that comprises also the *Sancta Sanctorum*, or antique private chapel of the Popes, adjoined to a Convent founded by Pius IX for Passionist friars, whose community here have the guardianship of those holy stairs. Not more than 28 steps now remain—the rest probably wanting since the earthquake in the IX century—their material being veined Tyrian marble, since the last century covered with wood, said to have been thrice renewed, beneath which that marble is seen, through grating, at spots where it is believed stains of the Redeemer's blood are visible! There is no day on which worshippers may not be seen in act of slowly ascending those stairs; but it is during Holy Week the concourse is at its height; and on Good Friday I have seen this structure completely covered by the multitude, like a swarm of bees settling on flowers! When we call to mind the circumstances of the siege of Jerusalem, the impossibility of genuineness in such a relic forces itself upon conviction; and the here manifest effects produced on the

popular mind afford example of unreasoning acceptance accorded to baseless legend ; yet when we consider such expression of faith and earnestness in the « Worship of Sorrow », surely whatever be the error in judgment , it is wiser to revere than condemn , remembering that—

Free service from the heart is all in all to Heaven.

To return to the events of history : Constantine , arriving in Rome for his last sojourn there in 326, was received, we are told , with maledictions : one contemporary says the Romans employed against him the weapons of ridicule ; and three years afterwards he effected that great step , the transfer of the seat of Empire to an eastern Capital , urged by motives , among which is one that gives to this event an import associating it with the story of Religion—the alienation naturally excited in his mind against a people whose temper and feeling were still essentially Pagan. Feeble indeed is the argument it has been attempted to build on these utterly inapt foundations for the favourite theory (one might rather say, fable) of Rome's abandonment by Constantine in a spirit of enthusiastic devotedness to the Papacy, in order that thenceforth St. Peter's successor might hold undivided sway over the Seven Hills !

It seems that the first rejection of this long-admitted legend , which assumed Constantine to have made an unconditional gift of Rome to St. Sylvester , was expressed , early in the XV century , by Lorenzo Valla , a native of this city. Accused before Eugenius IV of having advanced such sceptical views in a treatise *De Donatione Constantini* , that Pope ordered the charge to be inquired into , and Valla , if he were the author of the anonymous work , to be punished. He fled to Naples , and thence addressed an apology for his writings to the Pope , but without mentioning that in question. Nicholas V invited him to return to Rome , where he held a school of oratory , and was afterwards made Canon [of the Lateran ( see Tiraboschi ). In the « Hall of Constantine » at

the Vatican, the act of the Donation is represented as a religious ceremonial at St Peter's, and, with expressive symbolism, the Emperor kneeling before the throne of the Pope, whilst he hands over to the latter a golden image of the City resigned ! That Art should be made to perpetuate falsehood, is surely to degrade it. Some writers ascribe the invention of this fable to John, a Roman deacon of the X century ; but Dupin shows that it should rather be attributed to the author of the pseudo-decretals of Isidore. The MS. versions are different, but all condemned by internal proofs. Petrarch naively relates—that Constantine gave to Sylvester, and his successors for ever, the entire Western Empire ; crowned him with the imperial crown, and himself led the horse ridden by the new Pontiff-king ! And Dante's verse—

Ahi Costantin, di quanto mal fu madre, ec.—

seems to express the same idea of historic fact in what he deprecates.

The worthless sons of Constantine reigned (Constantine II in Gaul, Spain, and Britain ; Constantius in Asia and Egypt ; Constans in Italy, Illyria, and Affrica), to little purpose for the interests of Religion or Civilization. Constantius, who obtained sole dominion over the whole Empire after the deaths of his brothers in battle, and the overthrow of the usurper Magnentius in Gaul, never saw Rome except on occasion of a brief visit, A. D. 356, when her yet unimpaired magnificence, and especially the splendid aggregate of monuments in Trajan's forum, made the impression described by Ammianus Marcellinus, who mentions the witty rejoinder of a Persian prince, Hormisdas, to the young Emperor's ignorant boast that he would soon erect his own equestrian statue, equal in merit as an art—work (!) to that of Trajan which had elicited his admiration : — « You must first have a stable built for your horse equal to the one we see here ! » That imperial ingress may have enabled Rome to understand



what new elements were infused into the court and life of her rulers on the Bosphorus. Alone in a gilded chariot (an etiquette introduced by this young Prince for his progresses) did Constantius make his entry, in attire literally covered with jewels, while above his head floated purple standards, like balloons, taking the form of serpents when inflated by the wind; the escort by which he had been accompanied from Otricoli (about 35 miles' distance) formed of « Protectores », a guard of young nobles in rich armour with golden helms and banners stiff with gold embroidery, and « Cataphractes », another new company in armour of Persian fashion, made to fit close and yield to all movements of the body. The cumbersome etiquette and complex gradations of office introduced by Constantine, seem more in accordance with the old Oriental despotisms than with Christian civilization; and the high functionaries were now divided into three classes of the first, two of the second order, under the titles, *illustris spectabilis*, *clarissimus*, *perfectissimus*, ec. May we not see in the corruption of Religion and degradation of Art under Byzantine influences, the not unnatural result of haughty pomp without refinement, excessive splendour without intellectual elevation? It is evident that neither in consequence of this sojourn at Rome, nor of any policy pursued by the sons of Constantine throughout the reigns (338—61), was the position of the Church or that of Paganism essentially effected; and that the latter remained still the established Religion of the State, while Constantius occupied himself with Arian speculations, and persecuted those adhering to the Council of Nice—himself an Arian in conviction, according to Orosius, though others give him credit for orthodox views respecting the Holy Trinity; and St. Gregory Nazienzen credits the report that Angels had been heard singing while his body was borne across the passes of Mount Taurus to Constantinople! « He did not » (says a Heathen contemporary) « deprive the sacred Virgins of any of their privileges; he bestowed the priesthood on patricians; and never refused to the

Romans the sums requisite for their religious ceremonies: he visited the regions of the Eternal City, followed by a contented Senate, contemplating all the temples with interest, reading the names of the Gods inscribed on their fronts; inquiring as to the origin of these edifices, he praised the piety of their founders; and although himself of a different religion, provided for the preservation of such buildings in all the Empire, that each might observe his own customs, his own rites » (*Symmachus, Relation to Valentinian II*). Some of the laws passed under the reigns of the three brothers illustrate the relation in which the two religious parties now stood. In 340 Constans decreed that any person found in the act of demolishing an antique sepulchre (an offence against the sanctities of the grave become common—on the part of Christians not taught, by any instilled reverence for their own, to respect the resting place of other dead) should be condemned to labour in the mines, if acting without permission from the proprietors of such monuments; and even in the opposite case, punished by deportation. Against the same offence death was threatened by one decree (349); but afterwards commuted into a pecuniary mulct. A law inserted in the Code of Theodosius, under date 353, orders the closing of all temples, the abstaining from all sacrifices; and adds the penalty of death for transgressions; but so fully is this contradicted by fact, as well as by inscriptions that prove the free access into temples, the undisturbed practice of sacrificing in Rome, indeed throughout Italy, and the whole Western Empire under Constans, that we can only suppose the text to have been copied into the later code from some minute found among state-papers under Theodosius II (Beugnot, vol. I, lib. II, cap. I).

It does not appear that the apostasy of Julian caused any essential alteration in the circumstances of the Church, though, notwithstanding his professions of philosophic toleration, the public acts of his short reign make known to us a considerable number of martyrs put to death by governors

of provinces with the Emperor's consent ; and the testimony of two Pagans , Marcellinus and Eutropius , is sufficient in regard to the injustice of his laws against the Christians. They were interdicted (362) from the faculty of teaching Rhetoric or *Belles Lettres* ; and Orosius states (lib. VII, cap. 30) that Julian had projected a vast persecution against Christianity, in case of his victorious return from that Persian Campaign in which he met with the death so idealized by legends that invent the story of the arrow shot by an avenging Angel, and the exclamation from the dying Emperor , as he cast his own blood into the air , — « Galileian , thou hast conquered ! » (4). Neither Julian nor Jovianus ever visited Rome as Emperors ; and Valentinian (364-75), by assigning the government of the East to his brother Valens , while retaining the Western provinces for himself , returned to the policy of separation between the two Empires ; Milan becoming now the capital of the West. Though cruel and violent in temper , the former of those princes passed many excellent laws in a spirit conformable with Christian morality : he renewed the prohibition against the exposure of infants ; appointed physicians to attend the sick in each of the fourteen regions of Rome ; ordered that Grammar and Rhetoric should be taught in all chief towns of provinces. Under his reign a persecution was set on foot against the practices of illegal divination , with such intensity and violence as remind of the sufferings once endured by the Church ; but it is evident the Christians stood entirely aloof from this movement , which neither altered their own position towards the State , nor swept away any guaranteed privileges of the old Religion. The increasing wealth and influence of the Catholic Clergy

(4) The Virgin Mary is said to have enjoined St. Mercurius and St. Artemius to revisit the earth for the punishment of Julian ; and an arrow from one of these to have slain him on a Heathen altar — a legend more Paganish than Christian , represented in a fresco by Baglioni on the vault of the Borghese chapel at St. Maria Maggiore.

may be inferred from one of this Emperor's edicts addressed to Pope Damasus, and publicly read in churches, admonishing priests and monks no longer to frequent the houses of widows or virgins; and forbidding those who acted as spiritual directors to receive gifts, legacies, or inheritances from their penitents. If certain privileges were, in this reign, granted to Pagan priests, — as exemption from particular duties or punishments, and the admission of the provincial pontiffs to a social level with Counts of the Empire, — the Christians also became exempt from irksome liabilities: thus, by an act in 365, were they freed from the obligation of the periodical guardianship over Pagan temples and their rites, a duty all citizens had hitherto been required to fulfil when called upon, as occasion occurred. Yet the condition of the Christians under this reign is described as one of depression: the Clergy, Anastasius tells us, could no longer frequent the public Baths or go in safety to the churches; the faithful (says that ancient writer), were again persecuted; on the other hand we have the testimony of St. Jerome to the wealth of the Church at this period. Speaking of the law that prohibited ecclesiastics from receiving bequests, he says: « I do not complain of this law, but I lament that we have rendered it necessary; and it does not subdue avarice, for we contrive to elude it by *fidei commissa* ». Gratian, the son of Valentinian, who associated Theodosius in the again divided Empire (379), took steps tending towards, but far from accomplishing, the final overthrow of Paganism. In 382 he removed, for the second time, from the vestibule of the Senate House, the altar and statue of Victory, to which each Senator, at the commencement of each session, offered incense, and before which all took the oath of allegiance to the Emperor; which, same altar, first displaced by Constantius (357), had been restored by Julian. This last act of ejection was felt as one of the deadliest blows against the ancient system; for the majestic winged figure familiarly seen on Roman coins and triumphal arches in act of crowning victorious Emperors, was, to the Pagan mind, the



deified symbol of omnipotent Empire, as Claudian's verse implies :

Affuit ipsa suis alis Victoria templis  
Romanae tutela togae ; quae divite pompa  
Patricii veneranda fovet sacraria coetus.

( VI Cons. Honor. 597 ).

And able representatives of the old religion made efforts for repeal of this mandate, speaking in the name of a Senate still in the great majority Pagan. After Valentinian had become Emperor of the West, a deputation, headed by Symmachus, Prefect of Rome, waited on him at Milan, with an address written by that illustrious Senator, which, as advised of St. Ambrose, was given up before the day appointed for hearing it read in the consistory, so that the saintly bishop might become acquainted with its contents and prepare his answer. The well-known « Relation » of Symmachus has taken its place in Latin literature beside the two answers of St. Ambrose, one produced before, the other after, the Emperor's decision ; and vigour, with high-toned eloquence, here disguise so well the feebleness of his cause, that the address of Symmachus continued in such esteem as, twenty years afterwards, to elicit the poetic refutation by Prudentius, in the « Contra Symmachum », one of his most elaborate works. The imperial decision was, of course, negative, being subscribed even by two Pagan Counts, who sat in the consistory. Another similar attempt made in the same cause under Theodosius was repulsed in the abrupt answer to the deputies, again probably accompanied by Symmachus : « You do not represent the Senate » ; and when that orator, in addressing the consistory, insinuated a last faint recommendation for the altar of Victory, Theodosius ordered him to be seized and transported in a common vehicle to one hundred miles' distance from Rome. For a brief period, indeed, after some fruitless deputations to four Emperors, the statue of Victory was restored to its ancient place by the usurper Eugenius, during his

sojourn at Rome ; but after his overthrow , the transient revival of Paganism passed away together with its symbol in the Senate House.

When we look on that noble ruin of the *Curia* at the foot of the Palatine, reduced, as it is, to but the remnant of a Corinthian peristyle with its rich entablature, no more interesting memory becomes associated with its graceful decay than the contest so momentous, though referring immediately to a mere form of classic symbolism, respecting that altar and statue. Gratian aimed a greater blow at the system by suppressing all the revenues of the Pagan Priesthood and Vestal Virgins, and transferring the funds hitherto appropriated for their support to a savings-bank. He also laid aside the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, and refused the insignia of that office, which seven of his Christian predecessors had not hesitated to accept ; but that title is still read affixed to this Emperor's name, as well as to those of Valentinian and Valens, on one of the few public works of this period left in Rome—the restored Cestian bridge between the Island and the Transtiberine quarter (1).

Valentinian II died at Vienne, in Gaul, a victim to treason and assassination (392), before receiving the baptism St. Ambrose was to have administered after his abjuration of the Arian Heresy he had been brought up in by his mother Justina, but had renounced. Theodosius the Great, Emperor of the East, and eventually (394) sole ruler of the Roman world now for the last time united under one sceptre, opens a new and most important epoch for the story of Christianity ; and must be considered the true founder of the Catholic Church as a State Religion. With his reign terminates the official supremacy of Paganism : the Christian Hierarchy rises in renovated power and splendour ; Heresy becomes an ille-

(1) « Fl. Gratianus, Pius, Felix, Max., Victor, Ac. Triumf., Semper Aug. Pontif. Maximus, Germanic. Max. Alamann. Max. Gothic. Max. Trib. Pot. III, Imp. II. ec. ».

gal defection from the prescribed norma; yet the inner life of mythologic belief, with all its subtle influences over mind and morals, certainly endured, if but an under-current, yet still productive of its olden fruit, long subsequently to this energetic Prince's reign, and perhaps most of all in the Italian nation.

The extirpation of idolatry is a manifest aim in the laws of Theodosius—an object none of his Christian predecessors appear to have proposed to themselves, at least for accomplishment through compulsory means: though, indeed, during the first years of his reign, it is attested by four Pagan writers (Zosimus, Libanius, Eunapius and Symmachus) that the ancient worship was left in full liberty. About three years after he had become the associate in Empire with Gratian, he decreed that those who had apostatized from Christianity to Paganism, could not dispose of or inherit property by will, unless from a father, mother, or brother. We must infer that such scandal did not altogether cease in consequence of this measure, seeing that the same law had to be renewed, two years later, with extension of its penalties to simple catechumens; that Gratian applied its provisions to the Western provinces; and another law of Theodosius declared apostates infamous. In 385 the latter Emperor threatened death for the attempt to read into the future by consulting the entrails of victims, or by other magical and idolatrous contrivances. In 391 appeared the edict, hitherto most important of all as a crushing blow to antique superstition: « Let no one pollute himself by offering sacrifice, nor immolate innocent victims, nor enter into temples, nor protect images made by the hand of man, for fear of becoming guilty in the eyes of law both human and divine ». This was published in both Empires; and a similar edict, addressed, a few months afterwards, to authorities in Egypt, condemned the governors of provinces to a fine of 15lbs in gold (600 sterling) for the offence of merely entering a Pagan temple, and their officials to the same payment, unless they had opposed the will of their

superior in so acting. Next followed the prohibition of all private sacrifices, whether within temples or elsewhere—a form of Pagan worship now apparently common, though declared illegal long before this period; and finally, in 392, the absolute prohibition of bloody sacrifice under pain of death; also that of all other idolatrous ceremonies under pain of confiscation of the houses or estates where such had been performed. Within eight years was effected such extraordinary transition, productive of total change to the religious conditions under this Emperor, that what had been legal worship when he ascended the throne became an offence punishable with death! (1) Eugenius, an obscure Senator, once a teacher of *belles lettres* at Rome, was as it were forced to accept the purple by Arbogastes, the General of Valentinian, who had assassinated that young Emperor to avenge the loss of his military rank; and this transient usurpation (392–4), ending in the defeat of Eugenius by Theodosius, and his decapitation on the battle-field, secured a brief revival to the cause of Paganism, which that phantom-emperor protected, though not openly professing it as his own religion. Throughout Italy temples were now reopened; sacrifices again offered to the gods; crowds of fanatics assembled at the ancient rites; and at Rome especially was this restoration hailed with popular sympathy: the Pretorian Prefect Flavius, and the eloquent Symmachus exerting themselves to stimulate idolatrous zeal and support the usurper. The historian Zosimus and the poet Prudentius describe the visit of Theodosius to Rome, after his victory over that feeble rival; and the latter writer imagines the Senate, at his invitation, deliberating on the greatest of all subjects, the choice of a national Religion—

(1) Referring probably to the interval from 383 to 394, Zosimus describes how the inhabitants of towns continued to supplicate the Gods for deliverance from the calamities of such a reign: « As they enjoyed still the liberty of frequenting temples and appeasing the Gods by national rites ».



deciding, for the true one; a report even Gibbon adopts, adding that the Senate voted against Jupiter by a majority! But the Emperor's presence in Rome at this date cannot be proved, as is shown by Beugnot. Notwithstanding all his hostilities to their cause, the Pagans hastened to deify Theodosius after his death; and their sympathizing poet, Claudian, to celebrate his apotheosis.

The most important of this Emperor's decrees (A. D. 380) in religious interests, may be said to have altered the entire position of the Church, and infused a new (indeed merely human) element into her life amidst the world. « We, the three Emperors (Theodosius, Gratian, and Valentinian II) *will* that our subjects follow the Religion taught by St. Peter to the Romans, professed by those saintly prelates, Damasus Pontiff of Rome and Peter Bishop of Alexandria. According to apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, we believe in the one Divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of majesty co-equal in the Holy Trinity. We *will* that those who embrace this creed be called Catholic Christians; we brand all the senseless followers of other religions with the infamous name of Heretics, and forbid their conventicles to bear the title of churches; we reserve their punishment to the vengeance of Heaven, and to such measures as divine inspiration shall dictate to us ». — Thus, observes Mitman, « was the religion of the whole Roman world enacted by two feeble boys and a rude Spanish soldier! » Not less memorable is the story of Theodosius's repentance after the massacre at Thessalonica, in which town a sedition, excited by trivial dispute about a favourite charioteer of the circus, had caused loss of life, and the murder of state-officers who had interposed. In a paroxysm of rage, the Emperor (three years after his high profession of orthodoxy!) ordered an indiscriminate massacre, in which 7000 perished, of all ages and sexes, in the amphitheatre whither they had been decoyed for slaughter. St. Ambrose, apprised of this,

prohibited Theodosius from entering the cathedral of Milan, when he returned to that city soon after the event; and retiring into the country, the Prelate addressed a letter to him eloquent in reproaches: « Your subjects, O Emperor (he reminded him) are of the same nature as yourself; and not only so, but likewise your fellow-servants. For there is one Lord and Ruler of all, and He is the Maker of all creatures, whether princes or people. — How could you lift up in prayer hands steeped in the blood of unjust massacre? How could you with such hands presume to receive the most sacred Body of our Lord? » For eight months did Theodosius submit to the interdict which severed him from the communion of the faithful; and even at the end of that period, when, at the Christmas-festival, he hoped to receive absolution and had set out on his way to the Church, a message brought the intimation that he, being still excommunicate, could not yet enter the holy place; that the Bishop of Milan was ready to receive death from his hands, but not to admit unreconciled guilt into the sanctuary! To this also he yielded, and, instead of going to the cathedral, went to the house of Ambrose, listened to his severe reproaches submissively, and to the conditions he imposed—first, the public performance of penance; secondly, the passing of an edict to order that thenceforth thirty days should elapse before the carrying out of any sentence of death or proscription, and that, after that respite, all cases should be finally brought before the Emperor for the last decision. Such a law was immediately drawn up; and after signing it, Theodosius appeared in the public church; « prayed neither in a standing nor kneeling posture, but throwing himself on the ground—tore his hair, struck his forehead, and shed torrents of tears as he implored forgiveness of God ». (Theodoret, L. V, c. 48)—Such was the spectacle presented by the Ruler of that Empire, which, only about a century and a half previous to this, had submitted to the reigns of Antoninus Caracalla and the Syrian Helio-

gabalus ! What an example of the profound action of Christianity over the whole moral world, and over the motive principles by which it is governed !

Under Theodosius occurs the first ominous instance (385) of the judicial shedding of blood for religious opinion, not indeed by act of this wiser Emperor, but by that of Maximus, a usurping rival in Gaul : the victims, Manichean heretics, against whom and their leader Priscillian, a patrician Spaniard, persecution had been fiercely waged by certain bishops of that country. But the fatal precedent was disowned, the sentence reprobated by all the other great Prelates, as by the general voice of Christianity ; and Ambrose nobly refused to communicate with the bishops who had so forgotten their responsibilities as Vicars of Christ.

Honorius, declared Emperor of the West at the age of eleven years (395), was, as Gibbon describes, « without talents or passions—the son of Theodosius, engaged in the occupation of feeding his poultry, was content to slumber through life ; and during an eventful reign of twenty-eight years, it is scarcely necessary to mention his name ». Having fixed his court first at Milan, then for a short interval at Asti, and eventually at Ravenna (the henceforth Capital of declining Empire), this insignificant Prince made a pompous visit to Rome on occasion of his triumph there celebrated (404) for the victory won over the Goths by the able and valient Stilicho, without the slightest concurrence or responsibility on the part of Honorius himself. Disastrous as was his reign, the laws issued during its continuance through means of powerful ministers, especially Olympias, the « Master of Offices », were adapted to promote the interests of Christianity, and humane in their character. It may be assumed that it was in 398 appeared a new edict for the general abolition of Pagan sacrifices, the text of which is not indeed preserved, but two other decrees of the next year allude to a previous one as publicly known : one beginning, *Sicut sacrificia prohibuimus* ; the other setting forth, « We have already suppressed

profane rites by a salutary law » ; and this new phase in the circumstances of Paganism is the more remarkable, seeing that up to this time no *general* inhibition against the ancient worship had appeared, and if its rites had been suspended at Rome, the want of means, after the treasury had ceased to defray costs, can alone have been the cause. Shortly before these new measures, there had circulated throughout the Empire a prediction, probably inspiring fresh courage and hope to the Pagan party : an oracle was said to have declared that St. Peter had succeeded by magical arts in establishing the worship of Christ for 365 years, after the lapse of which time the new Religion would perish ! and the year 398 was to witness this prophecy's fulfilment preparatory to the renovated life of Paganism ! Gratian had deprived the idolatrous priesthood of all their property, and Theodosius had withdrawn all funds for the support of the public sacrifices ; but certain assignments for the benefit of the ancient worship, *annonae templorum*, still remained, serving to pay for the sacred banquets (*epulae sacrae*) and games, these more genial rites having been expressly sanctioned by Honorius ; but another law, A. D. 408, decreed the withdrawal of all this revenue : — *templorum detrahebantur annonae* ; and henceforth, if the gayer rites or feasts of olden superstition were kept up, their costs must have been defrayed by voluntary offerings : « Non liceat « omnino in honorem sacrilegi ritus funestioribus locis exercere convivia vel quidquam solemnitatis agitare ». Beugnot observes that « in the provinces, such offerings sufficed a long time for the requirement ». The same law provided that images, if still left in temples or fanes, and still the objects of superstitious regard, should be overthrown—*suis sedibus evellantur* ; but the edifices of the proscribed worship were now declared the property of the state, to be appropriated to public uses, conformably with the orders addressed to certain magistrates of provinces, in 399, that such buildings, if conspicuous as public ornaments, should be respected—a judicious opposition to that iconoclast zeal which might have



deprived Rome of her Pantheon alike with the classic statuary once under its dome. The merit of abolishing the cruel shows of the amphitheatre pertains to the legislation, if not to the personal efforts, of Honorius. It was among the various and splendid spectacles given for that hollow triumph described by Claudian, that the last engagement of gladiators for amusement of an applauding people took place on the arena of the Colosseum, while the Christian was, nominally, the established faith at Rome.

The first edict against homicidal shows was passed by Constantine (A. D. 325), addressed from Berytus to the Roman Prefect, forbidding both the combats and the exposure of convicts to die on the arena. But the popular avidity for bloodshed not being easily repressed, this law was perhaps never fully applied in the western provinces, and certainly had become a dead letter at Rome before 357, when it was revived by Constans and Julian, but again to be set aside, till re-enacted in 397. Theodosius had prohibited all public spectacles on Sundays; but it was not till 425 such were forbidden, by Theodosius II, on all religious festivals and throughout Lent. The continuance of the bloody spectacles in the Flavian amphitheatre is attested by St. Augustine in his « Confessions », and by Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, who thus denounces them in the latter years of the fourth century, addressing a Christian Emperor :

Arripe dilatam tua dux in tempora famam.  
In mortes miserorum hominum prohibete litari :  
Nullus in urbe cadat, cujus sit pœna voluptas.  
Jam solis contenta feris infamis arena,  
Nulla cruentis homicidia ludat in armis.

Their suppression however was not final till an event occurred which afforded occasion for more rigorous enactments. An oriental monk, named Telemachus, made a pilgrimage from the East to Rome, expressly for an object attended with the almost certain condition of martyrdom. During

the sanguinary shows at the Colosseum in honour of Honorius's triumph, he rushed between the combatants, and, falling on his knees, entreated the spectators to have mercy on the victims, to renounce for ever those cruel spectacles. Overwhelmed by showers of stones, he fell a martyr on the spot; but not shedding his blood in vain; for to this obscure sufferer Humanity is indebted for the cessation of the most odious, because purely voluptuous, outrage against her sacred laws.

Ecclesiastical annals are otherwise silent as to that Martyr of the Colosseum — the « Asiatic monk, whose death was more useful to the human race than had been his life », as Gibbon observes, not sparing his sarcasm even in reference to this high example of Christian heroism. But the memory of that self-sacrifice adds a solemn interest to Rome's most majestic ruin; and when the light of a setting-sun gilds the warm-tinted stonework of those gigantic arcades and still proudly towering walls, his story becomes interwoven with all those sublimest meanings now attached to the structure itself the most expressive monument of the triumph of the Cross. A consecrating glory for ever rests on that arena where suffered the noble army of Martyrs, whose ranks are closed by Telemachus, here dying under showers of stones among infamous gladiators (1).

(1) Salvian, Bishop of Marseilles (born 390), who certainly wrote after the time of Honorius, has been cited to prove that even this sacrifice of life for an interest of humanity failed to secure its blessed result; and it is indeed too evident, from a passage in his eloquent work, that if the gladiatorial combats had indeed ceased before the middle of the V century, the spectacle of human anguish was still displayed to entertain Rome's populace, in the fate of those victims (probably common criminals) at later periods exposed to wild beasts on the arena—« where (says the author) the highest species of pleasure consists in the death of human beings; or, what is worse and more terrible than death, in seeing men lacerated and devoured by wild animals, which gorge themselves with human flesh amidst the applause of all assisting, the pleasure of all beholders » (*De Gubernatione Dei*, L. VI c. 2).

The state of feeling and belief at Rome during the latter years of the IV century could not be better illustrated than in the narrative given by Zosimus of what he considers the sacrilege committed by Serena, the niece of Theodosius and wife of Stilico, — that same lady who is addressed in strains of courtly eulogium by Claudian :

Dic mihi, Calliope, tanto cur tempore differs  
Pierio meritam serto redimire Serenam ?

and whose tragic death so contrasts with the brilliant position she had enjoyed in the imperial family. Visiting Rome, A. D. 394, that princess one morning directed her walk to the temple of Cybele on the Palatine, where was still revered the miraculous image of the *Mater Idea* (a conical black stone, probably an aerolite, placed in the mouth of a silver statue), brought from the Phrygian Pessinus in the year of the City 449: observing on that idol a precious necklace, she coveted, and stretched out her hand to transfer it to her own person, an act not accomplished without being seen by an aged priestess, who upbraided Serena for her sacrilege; to which that lady, without pity for the feeble defender of a feeble cause, retorted first in sharp reprisals of the tongue, and finally by ordering her attendants to eject the old Vestal from the fane thenceforth left desolate (Zosimus, l. v. cap. 38). « One of the Vestal Virgins still left », is the expression of Zosimus; and the imprecations of the ex-priestess against Serena this Pagan historian sees fulfilled in the violent death to which the latter was unjustly condemned during the first Gothic siege, under suspicion of treasonable correspondence with the foe. « She frequently beheld (he assures us), both in sleep and when awake, a spectre denouncing to her proximate death, as other persons also had similar visions; and the vengeance that pursues the impious so well fulfilled its office that finally, when Serena knew the danger threatening her, she did not seek to avoid it, but stretched out to the

cord of the executioner that neck once adorned with the jewels of the goddess ». After relating the tragic story of the wife, this historian represents in the same light of divine retribution the fate of the husband, Stilicho, basely put to death at Ravenna with the consent of Honorius, in 408: «He had ordered the gates of the Capitol (i. e. the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus), which were covered with massive gold, to be despoiled of that ornament; and the workmen in detaching the golden lamina, found the words inscribed on the valves, *misero regi servantur*. The event corresponded to this inscription, for the end of Stilicho was miserable and worthy of pity ». Yet whatever the legal depression of Paganism at Rome, under Valentinian, Theodosius, and Honorius, the tenacity of its lingering life is proved, beyond doubt, by concurrent testimonies, both Christian and Pagan (St. Augustin, St. Ambrose, Symmachus): by the historian and the poet (Zosimus, Claudian, Ausonius); and by the multiform evidence of monuments—epigraphs and coinage (see Banduri, Gruter, Fabretti, Beugnot). St. Ambrose calls Rome « the Head of Superstition », — *caput superstitionis*. The Regionaries, aiming merely at guide-book exactness in the enumeration of public buildings, etc. present to us her physiognomy as still that of the great Pagan Metropolis, whose temples number 452, whose aediculae (or open way-side chapels, like those of the Madonna at the present day) are no fewer than 483—see Publius Victor, probably referring to the time of Valentinian I. Both Zosimus and Symmachus attest that, at least during the earlier years of Theodosius, the Pagan worship had full liberty; and the extreme rigour of that Emperor's laws seems never to have been felt in the Italian provinces, whilst undoubtedly enforced in other countries; their application, under the reign of his son, in the ancient Capital, being apparently so limited as long to prove reconcileable with all the organization and pompous procedure of mythologic worship. Ausonius (309-74) gives us a complete ceremonial calendar of Paganism—like an abridgment of the



« Fasti »—in his « De Feriis Romanis », beginning with the games in honour of Apollo at the Tiber's mouth, and ending with the spectacles of the Forum and Arena ; details that strikingly show to what extent the gladatorial combats were still in vogue as the supremely favourite entertainment of this people: « The gladiators engage in their well-known funeral combats on the Forum ; the arena next requires their services ; and towards the end of December they appease by their blood the god who bears the scythe and the goddess daughter of Heaven : »

Et gladiatores funebria praelia notum  
Decertasse foro : nunc sibi arena suos  
Vindicat : extremo qui jam sub fine Decembris.  
Falcigerum placant sanguine Coeligenam.

Still was offered sacrifice to Juno, the *Regina Sacrorum* immolating, at her festival, a sow or a sheep (Macrob. *Sat.* I. I, c. 15). Venus and Mars still received all their customary honours: *amabilem Venerem toto orbe laudatur*, as is the testimony of Symmachus to the homage the Cyprian Goddess yet obtained from adoring nations ; and the mystic dance and song of the Salian Priests still woke the echoes of Roman streets at the festival of her lover-god ; « at the present day » (says Macrobius, (*Sat.* I. 12) « we invoke Mars the father, and Venus the mother ». Saturn, the same writer tells us, had his altar before the Senaculum, where « according to Greek ritual, sacrifice was offered to him with veiled head » ; and Æsculapius's temple on the Tiber Island was still crowded by devotees, who passed the night there sleeping on the skins of sacrificed animals, in hope to obtain prophetic knowledge of the future (see St. Jerome) ; whilst the convalescent hung *ex votos* to the sacred walls (as Italian devotees now do in thanksgiving to the Virgin) after recovery from illness through favour of the physician-god. The celebrated temple of Janus, on the Capitoline declivity above the Forum, was not yet finally shut, and certainly stood till the close of the VI century ; its worship continuing at least as late as the end of the IV, a fact

enthusiastically attested by Macrobius, who says: « In our festivities we invoke Janus Geminus, Janus Father, Janus Quirinus », etc. (*Sat.* I, 9). The rites of Cybele, « Virgin Mother of all the gods », and the riotous procession in which her statue was carried to be washed in the Almo stream beside the Appian Way, (shortly beyond the present *Porta S. Sebastiano*), are described with abhorrence by St. Augustine (*Civit. Dei* II, 4): « miserable buffoons chanted before her car indecent verses such as it would be unbecoming, I do not say for the mother of the Gods, but for the mother of any person respectable in quality, to hear ». The oriental worship of Mithras has its record, among contemporary practices, in a relief on fused glass, (once at Pesaro), representing the *taurobolium* sacrifice with an inscription in the name of a « pontiff of the sacred association of the great god », who dedicates this offering to the mysterious sun-deity: « Deo « magno Mithra pollenti consenti, — Lari sancto suo », the date, singularly enough, coinciding with that of Theodosius's law forbidding sacrifices under pain of death! But of all the mythologic gods, Mercury is the one most frequently referred to, at this period, by sophists, rhetoricians, and other advocates of the ancient system; being generally regarded, Marcellinus tells us, as the animating spirit of the world and exciting controller of minds — « sensus velocior mundi, motum mentium suscitans ». The especially popular, gay, and all-equalizing Saturnalia, finally developed into the multiform « Calends of January », fêtes lasting from the 16th to the 25th December, were in vain denounced by ecclesiastical writers and Councils—and how deeply-struck were their roots in the mind of Rome's populace we see at the present day in their modified celebration as Carnival. The Lupercals, or feast of Pan, in February, with their races of naked priests, holding scourges of goat-skin, and striking those they met in the streets with blows received gladly by married women, who thus hoped to become pregnant, continued to exhibit their indecencies, and enjoy public favour at Rome, not only throughout the period here considered, but till more than a cen-

tury after Theodosius's reign ! (Prudentius, *Peristeph. hymn X*). Nor were absent the darkest features, the most cruel rites of that worship which had become, generally speaking, humanized through the wisdom of legislation under earlier influences; the human sacrifices to Jupiter Latialis, on the Alban Mount, being mentioned among practices of this epoch by Prudentius and Lactantius, contemporary witnesses : « Funditur humanus Latiali in munere sanguis », says the former (contra Symmach. l. I 396), « Nor have the Latins been innocent of such atrocity; for indeed the Latian Jupiter is even now worshipped with human blood—etiam nunc sanguine colitur humano », says Lactantius (De falsa Relig. l. I, c. 21).

The office of « Pontifex Maximus », resigned by the Emperors, had now become absorbed among the attributions of the Prefect of Rome and the College of Chief Pontiffs, who had, in fact, always exercised the jurisdiction, though the head of the State held the title proper to such dignity; nor were these prerogatives in any manner disturbed, on disavowed under Theodosius. A very significant act was the deliberate burning of the Sybilline Books by Stilicho, shortly before his departure for the campaign against the Goths, — whether from a personal religious motive or in deference to the persuasions of Christian citizens — how judged by the Pagan party we may learn in the verse of Rutilius, who deems this sacrilege worse than the matricide of Nero, and deserving all the punishments of the infernal realm !

*Nec tantum Geticis grassatus proditor armis,  
Ante Sibyllinae fata cremavit opis,*

*Odimus Althæam consumpti funere torris;  
Niseum crimen flere putantur aves.*

*At Stilicho æterni fatalia pignora regni,  
Et plenas voluit præcipitare colus.*

*Omnia Tartarei cessent tormenta Neronis,  
Consumat Stygias tristior umbra faces.*

*Hic immortalem, mortalem percutit ille;  
Hic mundi matrem perculit, ille suam.*

Yet though these oracular books had perished, it appears from an epigraph given by Beugnot that the College of Quindecimvirs, created for their custody, continued to survive for some years. Idolatrous worship being still allowed to enjoy such immunities, and, by its pomps of « garland, and shrine, and incense – bearing throng », to assert its potent ascendancy over ignorant minds in the metropolis of the West, we need not be surprised to find its dominion yet more absolute among rural populations and in provincial towns, although indeed the pontiffs of those localities received no support from—nor were in any manner linked with—the sacerdotal body at Rome: in the extremely loose system of this worship each local priesthood being at liberty to direct devotions and belief, in town or hamlet, to the favourite idol or most lucrative shrine. There is no doubt that, at this epoch, the temples in the Roman neighbourhood were frequented as ever: that Juno was adored with undiminished fervour at her antique fane in Lanuvium; Vesta at Alba; Jupiter and Fortune at Spoleto; Cybele at Ardea; Neptune at Ostia; Castor and Pollux in the festivals, mentioned by Marcellinus (lib. 49, 40), on the now desolate « Insula Sacra » at the Tiber's mouth; whilst famous oracles were still consulted at Antium and Praeneste. It is a noticeable recorded fact that at Marsala (the entire Island of Sicily being a particular stronghold of lingering Paganism) the old worship could only be abolished by the substitution of another, alike paid to the creature, that of the Virgin Mary, introduced at a late period in the V century! The well-known etymology of the word « Pagan », from « pagus » a village, is sufficiently significant of the circumstances under which this religion entered the final phase, destined to prove, at last, the term of its subtle and potent life. And the idea that Christianity was still (i. e. in the beginning of the V century) the religion of cities, Paganism that of rural districts, is naïvely expressed in a little bucolic poem, « De mortibus Boum », by Endelechius, a scarce-known poet of this epoch, who introduces three herdsmen



talking about the maladies to which their cattle are subject: one, himself a Christian, assuring his hearers that the best way to protect those animals against disease is to place between their horns « the sign of the cross of that God who alone is worshipped in great towns » :

Signum quod perhibent esse crucis Dei  
Magnis qui colitur solus in urbibus. —

Impossible as it is to determine date for such an event as the fall of a religion in the *moral* sense, it may be assumed, that about the year 408 was accomplished the final overthrow of Paganism in the Western Empire by the destruction, or else consecration to Christian worship, of its temples (Beugnot, l. IX, c. 10). A law of Honorius, published in 415, may be said to have given the last blow to its priesthood, and to all still surviving representatives of a condemned system; this edict immediately applying to Africa, but afterwards made to extend over the entire states under that Emperor. « We command that compulsion be used against the ministers of the Pagan superstition who shall not have quitted Carthage, and returned to their native towns, before the calends of November. — We ordain, conformably to the decrees of the divine Gratian, that all the property which the error of the ancients formerly appropriated for sacred things, be united to our demesnes, so that the usurpers of such property shall be obliged to make restitution of its fruits, dating from the day it was prohibited to place the costs of that execrable superstition on the list of public charges. — These orders shall be executed, not only in Africa, but in all regions of our Empire. The Christian Religion shall be placed, without obstacle, in possession of all the property we have assigned, by numerous constitutions, to the venerable Church. Error having been abolished, it is right to exonerate our finances from the expenses of the superstition so justly proscribed, and to absorb therein the fruit of the properties once

belonging to the several corporations of Heathenism, whatever their title, and which formerly served for the payment of religious festivals or for other costs of worship ». This law may be considered a compendium of all the policy hitherto adopted by Christian Emperors against the Gentile Religion; and the final sentence of ruin against its olden institutions.

The reigns of the first Christian Emperors were sterile as to monuments, save in that one range of sacred edifices where so much was accomplished, but so little is left for our own time. — The obelisk now on the Lateran piazza, the loftiest and most ancient among such monoliths in Rome, was erected by Constantius, A. D. 357, on the spina of the Circus Maximus, and finally removed from the site where it was found buried deep under earth, in 1587, to be placed where we now see it. Its original pedestal bore long inscriptions on each side, injudiciously sacrificed in order to use the material for repairing the shaft; and from one of these (preserved by Gruter) we learn that Constantine had caused it to be removed from Thebes to adorn his new metropolis, but Constantius had determined to bestow it, instead, upon Rome, whither it was transferred from Alexandria, having been brought no further than that city before Constantine's death. The inscription states that it had arrived whilst Rome was suffering under the tyranny of Magnentius, the usurper, here called in derision « Taporus ». An object surpassing in antiquity every other even in this City, dating from a period before Moses, and anterior to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, was well added to the range of Rome's monuments before she finally lost her character as capital of the Western Empire; and the link is thus completed that unites her Christianity with the oldest memories of the ancient world. This obelisk was dedicated by Constantius during his brief visit to Rome; the inauguration of the Diocletian Thermae being another of his official acts at that period. Among other local antiquities, however, we find several epigraphs of the IV century, curious for their inflated style and bad Latinity—to be

read amidst the ruins of Trajan's Forum, and in the Capitoline Museum. Deceased emperors still receive the title « *divus* »; to Valentinian is a dedication styling him « *Rerum humanarum Domino* »; and the following inscriptions (Capitol) are characteristic: « *Piissimo Fortissimo Fundatori Pacis et Restitutori Publicae Libertatis Victoriosissimo D. N. F. Val. Constantino Pio Felici Aug. etc. etc. — Magno et Invicto Imp. Caes. C. Val. Aurel. Constantino Pio Fel. In victo Aug. Pontif. Max. etc. etc.* ».

One remarkable feature in the primitive Church's history is the alternation of hostilities and favours from Emperors alike alien to her. It is evident that, long before the conversion of Constantine, the policy towards the new Religion had become a great question of State; that Christianity had begun to weigh in the balance of public affairs; and, whether acting as fierce persecutors or gracious protectors, the imperial Rulers could no longer consider the worshippers of Christ mere insignificant sectarians. Constantius Chlorus, reigning over Britain, Gaul, and Spain, belonged to that class of enlightened Romans (perhaps not few) who, rejecting the olden fables, acknowledged one God, without ceasing to pay official respect to the dominant system. Bishops were familiarly entertained at his palace; and all molestation against Christians was forbidden throughout his states; though, after the persecuting edicts of Diocletian, their public worship was suppressed alike in these as in other provinces. Philosophic tolerance seems the salient trait in Constantius's character; but his colleague Maxentius, reigning in Italy and Africa, went farther, in semblance at least, and actually affected to embrace Christianity, with some pretensions to pious zeal, after the overthrow of Severus, who had been raised to the rank of Caesar by Maximianus, and had endeavoured to subject Maxentius's portion of the Empire to himself; which pretender's policy towards the Church being hostile, Maxentius adopted the opposite course purely from political motives. Most memorable among all acts of the Pagan Emperors towards their

Christian subjects, was the edict of Galerius, the instigator of Diocletian's persecution, who, when become a prey to dreadful disease, and feeling the term of his life to be near, issued the proclamation of tolerance from Nicomedia, in April 314: a document valuable as evidence to the constancy of the faithful under their late severe trials, and to the mysterious power of conscience, here evinced no less strikingly than on those Roman monuments where we still traced the remorse of the fratricide Antoninus Caracalla for the murder of Geta: « As we have perceived » (referring to the Christians) that the greater part persist in their obstinacy, refusing to render to the Gods the worship due, *no longer even adoring the God of the Christians*; through an impulse of our extreme clemency, and according to our custom of bestowing marks of our benevolence on all men, we have determined to extend to them also the effects of our indulgence; to permit them to resume the observances of Christianity, and to hold their assemblies, under condition that nothing shall there take place contrary to good order. We prescribe to the magistrates, by other letters, the course they are to pursue. The Christians, in recognition of the benevolence we entertain for them, will regard it as a duty to invoke their God for our preservation, for the State's and their own salvation, that the Empire may in every part enjoy safety, and that they themselves may live without peril or fear ». — The clause above given in italics is indeed most singular, coming from such a source; and some erroneous idea respecting the Divine Trinity may here be conjectured as perhaps the best explanation—unless it can be deemed possible that the exaggeration of saint-worship had already become apparent even to the Heathen?

The oracle, though still consulted at certain famous shrines, may be regarded as now in its last phase, before total eclipse; this once awfully-revered form of Pagan practice being already discredited by the sarcastic exposures of Lucian (see his « Pseudomantis » and « Jupiter Tregaedus ») and



by the avowals, from various Heathen sources, that its efficacy had ceased. Even from the time of Augustus the oracle of Jupiter Ammon had been abandoned to the solitude of its Libyan desert; and Juvenal laments the silence of the most illustrious among all, the Delphic, on the sacred steep of Parnassus :

— Quoniam Delphis oracula cessant,  
Et genus humanum damnat caligo futuri.

Still more clear and detailed is the testimony of the devout Pagan, Symmachus, to the general cessation of such fatidic responses in the IV century: «Dost thou not know that the oracles, which formerly spoke, have become silent? One reads no more the letters in the cavern of Cuma; Dodona confides no more her secrets to the trees; nor any more do the verified oracles proceed from the abyss of Delphi » (Epis. 33, lib. IV). Whatever the degree of imposture and illusion, priestcraft or phantasm, mixed up with such agencies of olden idolatry, the idea of some supernatural element in the Oracle-system scarcely deserves the contemptuous rejection it has often met with, but may be conjecturally admitted when we consider how little we know of the spirit-world that surrounds us, and how unfathomable the mystery of the realities perhaps removed but by a dim veil from our cognisance! We have the authority of Milton for that higher view which supposes the delusive Powers to have deserted each haunted cave or shrine in compulsory flight before the Dayspring from on high, and dates from the dawn of Christianity the memorable event in question.

The Oracles are dumb;  
No voice nor hideous hum  
Runs thro' the arched roof with sounds deceiving;  
Apollo from his shrine  
Can no more divine,  
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving!  
No nightly trance or breathed spell  
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell!

The Christian Basilica was the chief artistic offspring of inventive genius under the Emperors of this period, and as such is entitled to a place in the story both of the Church and of intellect. Its primitive type has been found by some (Ricci, *Storia dell' Architettura in Italia*) in those vaulted oratories, still accessible, amidst the labyrinthine corridors of catacombs; by others (and with better-sustained proof) in the public edifices known by the same name among the Greeks and Romans, the first of which seen in Rome was the Portian Basilica, founded by Marcus Portius Cato, 231 B. C.

Constantine, in his eagerness to create splendid buildings and attach his name to a great moral movement, proved himself a despotic benefactor with little judgment or discretion; and was in the habit of exacting (as we learn from the Theodosian Code) that his new churches should be completed within a given period, sometimes but little later than their first appearance above the foundation-walls: the natural consequence of which was, what we are told by the historian Zosimus, that almost all those structures «fell into ruin shortly after his life-time; as it was impossible they could long endure after being erected with so much haste». And, in fact, at the present day, the only one of this Emperor's sacred buildings extant at Rome in anything like its original integrity, is the Mausoleum of his daughter on the Nomentan Way. The ancient St. Peter's must have been, (judging from authentic representations) but a barbaric attempt, though indeed imposing and venerable, in which was manifest rather the ruin of an ancient than the birth of a new style: the whole structure, except the brickwork of its walls (six to eight palms in thickness), being pieced together from the spoils of classic antiquity, without general harmony of design, and with incongruous blending of horizontal and rounded forms in the flat architraves of the nave and narrow arches above colonnades in the four aisles. Among the 148 columns, that presented a grand perspective as seen from the eastern entrance, some were from the

septizionum, or southern façade of the Caesars' Palace, raised by Septimius Severus.

Agincourt supposes the same architect to have been engaged for the three great basilicas, the Lateran, the Vatican, and Ostian. The last, above the sepulchre of St. Paul, was probably the least noticeable for scale or beauty, and had briefest existence; for the year 386 saw its demolition, when destined to give place to the much larger and nobler church ordered by the co-reigning Emperors, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, who, in their rescript to the Prefect of Rome, desiring him to undertake this erection, require that its dimensions should be extended so far as the level ground on the Tiber-shore would here admit. Its new plan was in fact the reversal of that adopted for the earlier church: where once stood the high altar and tribune now rose the nave and four aisles, with front immediately on the river-side; and where once had opened the chief portal now stood the choir with its terminating apse; so that, instead of from East to West, the aspect was from West to East, and the celebrant at the high altar had to look westward, contrary to the general precedent, as exemplified at St. Peter's and the Lateran. In this building's design the leading idea seems taken from the antique basilicas, with the adjunct of a transverse nave, giving to the whole a form like the letter T; central to which compartment was the « confessional », or Apostolic shrine; the nave and four aisles being divided by columns, twenty in each file, in part the spoils from classic monuments—perhaps (though this is uncertain) from Hadrian's Mausoleum—but, for the rest, different in scale, material, and in the orders of their capitals and basements; the architectonic plan so strangely defective that even the intervening spaces were unequal! Instead of the architrave was preferred the surmounting arch—one step of progress since the building of St. Peter's; and above this arcade rose a very lofty attic, quite bare, till at a later period adorned with fresco-portraits of the Popes in chronologic order. The edifice

suffered much from earthquake in 816 and 1347, after which it was, in each instance, strengthened by buttresses. At another mediaeval period, an arcade with columnus of quite disproportionate height was carried along the transepts, dividing it into two transverse aisles; an insignificant portico was built against the façade in 1725; but, these alterations excepted, the basilica of Theodosius remained standing in its olden integrity till the night of its destruction by fire, 1823.

The buildings and sites dedicated to Pagan worship were classified as *templum*, *aedes*, *fanum*, *delubrum*, *aedicula*, *tesca*, *sacellum*, and *lucus*. From none of these did the Christians take any suggestion for the architecture or disposal of their sacred edifices; but in another, the *Basilica* (a name assigned to the royal palace, the tribunal of Justice and the Exchange of Commerce), they found a type better adapted to their purposes, and applicable, with little modification, to the uses of a sacramental, intellectual, symbolic, and eminently social worship (4).

(4) The *Templum* was not invariably a building, but sometimes a walled enclosure, either consecrated for worship, or merely inaugurated for some public usage—thus were the Curia Hostilia, the Curia Julia, and even the Rostra, classed among *templa*; the *Ædes* was, in the exclusive sense, a sacred edifice, the « church » of Pagan worship, always consecrated, whilst the former might be without such dedication, though inaugurated. The *Fanum* also might be merely a space marked out by the Pontiff for sacred uses; and the *Delubrum* (as to which term grammarians differ) was probably an edifice where, under one roof, the images and worship of different deities had their centre. The *Ædicula* was a small isolated shrine, or niche, usually within a temple, raised by private piety, without formal consecration by the priesthood; the *Tesca*, a shrine or tabernacle apart from other buildings; the *Sacellum*, a chapel containing an image of some deity, without portico, and sometimes without roof; the *lucus* being the sacred grove, dedicated to a particular deity, as were several in the Roman neighbourhood—one to Picus and Faunus (between Ostia and Ardea); another, near Aricia, to Egeria; to Mercury on the Appian Way; to the Bona Dea, (or Fauna), near



In the new sacred buildings the general plan was taken, with all leading features, from those Roman courts of justice, whose title they retain. The principal Christian Basilicas had an outer porch called « Propylon », or, more commonly, the « first Narthex », appropriated for sepulture after it had been permitted, by a Council in the VII century, to inter within the limits of churches. Here alone was access allowed to those severed from Christian communion; and probably at the smaller Basilicas, which had no atrium (or cloister), the penitents of one class remained in this outer Narthex. From hence was entered the atrium, a court surrounded by four porticoes, with intercolumnations closed by a net-work of gratings, in the centre of which gushed a fountain, where the faithful, before entering the church, used to wash both hands and face — the original practice afterwards reduced to the simple signing of the Cross with holy water inside the sacred edifice, around this fountain being usually inscribed in Latin or Greek: — « Wash your sins and not your faces only »; and its waters were blessed, on the festival of the Epiphany, with the formula still preserved in Greek liturgies. The outer Court, called also « Paradisus », was sometimes planted with trees and flowers. Under its porticoes stood the first class of penitents; whilst those guilty of the more grievous sins could only frequent the central open space—as Tertullian tells us that such offenders were not only forbidden from entering the Church, but from remaining under any roof that belonged to the sacred premises. The interior Narthex, or that side of the portico corresponding with the church-front (to which modern use applies the term *atrium* exclusively), whence was admission by three or five portals into the nave and

Albano; also the well-known grove of the Camoenae (Muses) near the Porta Capena. One sole example of the Pagan aedicula still extant in Rome, is a small brick rotunda, with niches, on the Appian Way, between S. Sisto and the *Porta S. Sebastiano*. In the countless Madonna-shrines of this City's streets, we see the antique *tesca* faithfully reproduced.

aisles, was the place assigned to the Catechumens, the Energumenes, and those Penitents styled « *audientes* », because allowed to listen to the psalms, hymns, and preaching, till a signal for them to retire. It was also permitted to Heathens, Jews, Heretics, or Schismatics to enter the Narthex and listen to the instructions, in order that they might have opportunity for conversion.

In her system of regulated penance and ascetic preparation, the life of the primitive Church most strikingly displays itself; and in no other aspect do we see more manifest the power that transmuted the whole social state in accordance with spiritual requirements, conformably to an ideal completely new for the Roman world. In detail that discipline was as follows: *audientes* were admitted to the outer narthex or portico alone; to which same place the excommunicate also were limited by law so late as the reign of Justinian. The Catechumens, or class under instruction, were allowed to enter the inner narthex, or atrium, there to listen to the scriptures, the hymns, and sermon; the *prostrati* (ranking as the third class) might enter the sacred aisles, and, after attending certain parts of the service, receive imposition of hands, with a form of prayer, as they knelt before the bishop; the fourth class, *consistentes*, being allowed to remain during the entire rite, but not to make oblation or communicate, because yet deprived of the highest privileges. Towards the close of the IV century the system of public penance fell into disuse at Constantinople, though retained much longer in the Latin than in the Greek Church, over which an atmosphere of despotism more immediately extended its baleful influence.

To return to our survey of the sacred building: From the portals the worshipper entered the nave (*naos*), flanked by two aisles, that on the left for males, that on the right for females, the centre being kept free for processions. Near the end was the *Presbyterium*, an elevated space divided by parapet-walls, with pulpits (*ambones*) for the Gospel and

Epistle, a desk for the lessons and office, and a candelabrum for the Paschal taper. Beyond, and below the span of the *triumphal arch*, rose the sanctuary (*cella* or *hieration*) ascended by steps, and comprising the « Confessional » or crypt, where reposed the remains of some Martyr, or other saint: above this being the high altar over-canopied by a baldacchino with pillars (*ciborium* or *propitiatorium*), and surrounded by candelabra (1). Within its canopy used to hang a vessel in form of a dove, containing the consecrated Eucharist; and during the rites painted or embroidered veils were extended around, to be drawn aside at certain passages—similar to the usage at this day preserved in the Greek and Armenian Churches (2). Beyond the altar was a semicircular recess

(1) The Christian altar was originally a mere table of wood (unless some Martyr's tomb, as in the catacombs, were so used); not till the VI century was stone required for its proper material, by decree of a Council, that of Epaonis, 509. It has been maintained, nor altogether incorrectly, that in early churches only one altar had place; but Anastasius tells that seven were seen in the ancient Lateran; the ancient St. Peter's is said to have contained three; and St. Gregory of Tours mentions a church in which were thirteen. Yet the principal Sicilian basilicas, as local antiquarians show, had but one altar each. Neither lights, nor reliquaries, nor images, stood on the primitive altar; but the beautiful decoration in flowers, appropriate everywhere, became common in the IV century; whether applied to pavements, thresholds and pillars alone, as the verse by St. Paulinus seems to convey: - *Spargite flore solam, praetextite limina sertis* — or to the sacred table itself, as appears from passages in St. Augustine and St. Jerome. The same poet of this century mentions a very precious gold cross, inscribed with the holy monogram, in the basilica at Nola — the Crucifix being yet unknown.

(2) Veils, with representations of sacred subjects in embroidery, were much used for various purposes in Roman churches, during the first nine centuries (See Anastasius, who enumerates and describes them).

(*absis*), with a throne for the Bishop and stone benches for the Clergy; the whole of this part commonly called *tribunal*, because answering to that where, in the Pagan Basilica, the chief magistrate presided. At each side, forming the extremities of the aisles, were divisions called *Senatorium* and *Matroncum*, the former for patricians or other distinguished persons, the latter for noble ladies, or (according to some writers) those women who, though not confined to the cloister, had been consecrated to religious life. Besides these divisions some churches had a gallery running round the aisles, above the colonnades, for consecrated virgins and widows—probably for all female worshippers—as still seen at the *SS. Quattro Martiri* and at *S. Agnese* on the Nomentan Way. Thus was, for the first time, introduced into architecture by Christianity a new language of mystic meanings, a representation of religious society itself, opening completely novel sources of interest within this domain of art, and admirably adapted to promote that teaching for whose objects neither books nor other educational means were at hand in early ages.

Once more to refer to that liberality of the first converted Emperor, which so permanently affected the position of the Church at Rome: Ciaconius computes (from Anastasius) the revenues bestowed by him on all his basilicas here at 235,527 gold *coronate* (crowns) per annum, out of which 60,000, besides other emoluments, went to the income of the Popes. Agincourt, enumerating the ornamental and sacred objects given for the sanctuary, reports the aggregate in weight as 1880 lbs of gold, 49,513 of silver, 7,420 of bronze. And the character of certain among these serves to illustrate the details of worship in the Constantinian Church: e. g. 44 altars of silver; 234 gold and silver chalices; 53 gold and silver vessels (*amae, amulae*) for wine at the offertory; 9 *coronae*, or pendant chandeliers; 7 silver stags (allusive to Baptism); 327 silver chandelabra, called *phara canthara*; and 492 others of the kind



called *phara*; 4 censers; and 2 gold crosses, each 450 lbs in weight (1).

(4) Fleury (lib. IX) admits the historic fact of the Vision of the Cross seen by Constantine. Eusebius (*Vita Constantini*), narrating it in Greek, gives the luminous inscription in the two words alone, *τοῦτο νικᾷ* - amplified in the Latin rendering. See also De Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire*; Thierry, *Tableau de l'Emp. Rom.*; Hope, « History of Architecture »; Ricci, *Storia ec.*; Martigny, *Dictionnaire*; Champagny, *Les Antonins*; Rheinwald, *Kirchliche Archaeologie*.

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## IV.

### **Christian Rome in the Fourth Century.**

FROM the reign of Constantine to that of Justinian the local churches (or dioceses) in the entire Empire attained the number of 4800 ; and the income of their Prelates (no doubt varying in proportion to the dignity or opulence of the several cities) has been estimated at an average of 600 pounds per annum (« Decline and Fall », c. XX). It seems impossible to ascertain with anything like exactness the Christian population of the Empire at the period of Constantine's incipient conversion. Different writers have conjectured it at amounts varying between one fifth and one twentieth in the entire census ; whilst some assume that, among thirty millions, the supposed population of the provinces under that Emperor's immediate government, the Christians, within those limits, formed about one fifth. At Rome the wealth of the Bishopric probably surpassed by far that of all other sees ; the whole clerical body there consisting of forty-six priests (or presbyters, their more proper designation), seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and *ostiarii* (door-keepers), engaged in the serving of at least forty churches, exclusive of those under the same Prelate in suburban districts ; and in her regular charities this local Church supported fifteen hundred widows or other poor.

The primacy so early obtained by the Roman Bishop seems in great part due to the prestige of position and the high claims

of that City—the « *urbs* » par excellence—in which his chair was placed; also to the generally assumed superiority of St. Peter and St. Paul, co-founders of that See, among other Apostles; and we find remarkable expression of the idea of ecclesiastic pre-eminence deriving simply from local advantages in a canon of the second General Council at Constantinople, determining a rank second only to the Roman Pontificate for the See of that eastern metropolis—« because it was the new Rome ». No peculiar title distinguished the successors of St. Peter from other Prelates till the XI century, when Gregory VII claimed for them exclusively that of « *Papa* » — previously given to other bishops, as they were addressed in familiar letters (see Sidonius Apollinaris), besides the still more venerable names, long as generally shared, of « *Supreme Pontiff* », « *Apostolicus* », or even « *Vicar of Christ* ». Till the IX century, « *Vicar of St. Peter* » was the sole title proper to the Roman Bishop alone among church-dignitaries.

That the two sees founded by the same Apostle, Rome and Antioch, with that of Alexandria, founded by St. Mark, were about equal in the regard of primitive Christianity, seems the obvious sense intended in a canon of the Nicene Council (the sixth among twenty considered authentic): « We ordain that the ancient usage which concedes authority to the Bishop of Alexandria over the provinces of Egypt, Libya, and the Pentapolis, should be retained; forasmuch as the Bishop of Rome has similar jurisdiction over the suburbican provinces. We likewise desire that the rights and privileges of the Church of Antioch, as of other Churches, should be preserved, but not with any prejudice to those of the Metropolitans ».

A typical presentment of the supreme powers bequeathed by our Lord to St. Peter has been divined in the sculpture of Elias ascending to Heaven and leaving his mantle to Elisha, among the reliefs, of very early date, now at the Lateran Mu-

seum (see Northcote, « Roman Catacombs »). But different is the application, and more nobly enlarged the sense given to this type by St. Chrysostom : « Elias, in ascending to Heaven, let his mantle fall on Elisha : Jesus, when He too ascended thither, left the gift of His graces to His disciples ; graces which constitute not merely a single prophet, but an infinite number of Elishas, much greater and more illustrious than that one » (Homil. II in *Ascens. Dom.*). That idea of *parity* between the two founders of the Church in Rome so frequently manifest in primitive art, seems still to have prevailed in the IV century, if we may judge from the words of St. Ambrose : « It is indeed uncertain which of these (Apostles) can be preferred to the other ; and I must deem them equal in merits as they were equal in martyrdom ». Dupin says, respecting the ecclesiastical polity of these ages, that, while the churches of three great cities, Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, were considered pre-eminent, the *first* had the primacy even among these ; and her Pontiff « was esteemed first among all bishops on earth, though not indeed believed infallible ; for, though often consulted, and though his opinion was allowed special weight, that opinion was not always blindly received ; every bishop being convinced that he had himself the right to judge in ecclesiastical interests » (*Auteurs Eccles.* v. I). Yet even if we may refer to extraordinary combinations of favourable circumstance the origin of a spiritual power destined to become the greatest ever beheld in the civilized world, for ages inseparably associated with all primordial interests of Christendom, itself the animating principle and ruling will upon earth in the immortal life of Christ's Church, not the less assuredly are we constrained to admire and revere the ways of Providence in the wonderful story of this hierarchic dominion.

Whilst Emperors nominally Roman ruled over the East and West, whether from Constantinople, Milan, or Ravenna, ecclesiastical polity seems to have become naturally cast into the mould



prepared for it by the civil power. The governative partitionment of the Empire into « Vicariates » resembles that ultimately adopted for spiritual jurisdiction; and perhaps first suggested the constitution of great Patriarchates, or Metropolitan Sees, within boundaries similarly defined: thus as the civil Vicariate of Rome comprised all the provinces of Etruria, Umbria, Picenum, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, that City's Pontiff was by consequence (in so far as outward and human circumstances reacted on him) invested with a rank, as Metropolitan, supreme in spiritual things over all churches situate in those districts; and where, within those states, any see became vacant, the Clergy and people elected, with deference to Rome for confirmation and for the ordaining of the nominee. Analogous was the authority of the Milanese Bishopric over all churches in the « Vicariate of Italy », to which that city was the capital (Giannone, *Storia civile del Regno di Napoli*, l. II. c. 8). The democratic element still, in fact, prevailed in the episcopal election. Either the people proposed the candidate, whom the Clergy accepted, or else the people and Clergy together chose one among three candidates proposed by the aggregate bishops of the province; or, as sometimes the case, several candidates were proposed to the Metropolitan, who accepted and ordained the one he deemed worthiest; his ratification being in each case final. In this important matter of discipline the Nicene Council laid down a clear and admirable norma: « A Bishop should be ordained by all the other Bishops of his province, if this be possible; if they cannot be assembled, he should be ordained by three bishops, provided those absent give their suffrages and consent by letter; but the validity of all effected in the province must be dependant on the Metropolitan ». To this principle of free election, and still more to the almost invariable intervention of the people in the choice of their chief pastors, seems mainly due the character of patriarchal benignity that throws such a holy light around those ancient prelates, and

the genuine tenderness, the divine sanctities of the relationship maintained between pastors and their flocks (1). The Bishop of these ages was not only the teacher of Truth, but the guardian of the poor and protector of the oppressed. It was among his attributes to interpose in the enforcement of

(1) The evidence to the fact of this popular intervention, as essentially legal and recognised by the Church, is supplied with the most convincing force. We find the principle laid down in emphatic terms by two Popes of the V century: « Let no bishop be given to those unwilling to receive him: the consent and desire of the Clergy and people are requisite » (Celestin. I, *ep.* II, 5). « When the election of a chief priest has to be decided, he who is demanded by the concordant consent of the Clergy and people, should be preferred to all others » (Leo. I, *ad Anastas.*). The election of St. Ambrose, A. D. 374, is a well-known and striking example: for it is apparent that the popular voice *alone* raised that holy man to the See of Milan: the synod of bishops had, courtier-like, deferred the nomination absolutely to the Emperor Valentinian, which he refused, leaving it to their own more suitably exerted control; a multitude assembled, not without tumult, to discuss the subject; Ambrose, then governor of the province, and not only a layman but as yet unbaptized, appeared in the intent of preserving order; when at once all disputes ceased: « the contending parties declared with one voice that they chose Ambrose as their bishop; — the Emperor, being informed of this election by the people, ordered that the object of their choice should be immediately baptized and ordained » (Theodoret. l. IV, c. 7). About the same period a Bishop of Alexandria, Peter, denounced the illegal intrusion of an Arian predecessor into that See, objecting that « he had not been elected by a synod of bishops, by the votes of the Clergy, or by the request of the people, according to the regulations of the Church » (*ibid.* l. IV, c. 22). When we consider how triumphantly an opposite system has been raised above the ruins of the Constitution proper to the primitive Church, and to what perilous straits religion in Italy has been at last reduced under that later form of church-government, we may be led to anticipate a happier future through the now-desirable conditions of a return to the Past.

law, and exhort judges to humanity in the treatment even of the guilty. Twice every week he visited all prisoners in the jails. Elected to his sacred office by general acclamation, or at least with the suffrages of his clergy and flock, he became « the supreme arbiter in such civil matters as occurred among members of the body, and thus the conservator of peace » (Milman, B. IV, c. I). To each church was secured, by the Theodosian code, the right of asylum, finally extending not only to all sacred buildings, but to their outer gates; though no fugitive was permitted to profane the holy place by eating or sleeping there, and the strongest prohibitions forbade the introducing of arms into the sanctuary (1).

Whilst the ancient Capital was ruled by Byzantine Caesars through their delegated officers, no sooner did each new Autocrat ascend his throne at Constantinople than he sent his portrait to Rome, there to be received with a sort of courtier-idolatry, as prescribed by etiquette, the Pope, the Clergy, the Magnates and Army vying to pay it all due honours, after which, according to customary ceremonial, it was placed by pontific hands in a chapel of the Lateran palace. One prerogative, that of coinage, was yet exercised by the Senate, till about the end of the VIII century, when it naturally passed among the Papal privileges; but not more than two coins of Popes of earlier date than 800, can be produced (v. Muratori). As for the attributions of that august senatorial body, they became limited to nothing more than the range of municipal and judicial affairs, at least from the time of the Greek conquest over the Goths under Justinian. At the head of their « Curia », as restored in the VI century, stood the *Prefectus Urbis*, nominated by the Emperor, and supreme in his character of judge. After the Exarchs had become viceroys of Empire in Italy, they also, whilst resident at Ravenna, were represented

(4) The right of asylum having been much and early abused, Justinian inhibited it to certain heinous offenders: murderers, adulterers, and the debtors of the State. At present it is guarantied by law under the Papal Government alone.

at Rome by the *Magister Militum*, invested with both political and military authority.

But the unrivalled energies and ever self-developing life of the Church constitute the principle that dominates over the entire historic scene; and a phase of hierarchic government is now attained, which precedes the gradual disappearance of the democratic before the aristocratic element, itself destined at last to give place to the absolute monarchic principle successfully asserted by the Papacy. The opening scenes of the historic drama in this century have still a tragic character—persecution, conflict, martyrdom—though on the very eve of a new day to be signalled by religious triumphs. Pope Marcellinus (296–304) became the victim of the implacable rage excited in the tyrant Maxentius, mainly, it seems, owing to the fact that the Christian matron Lucina (whose name is perpetuated in ecclesiastical annals), had bequeathed to the Roman Bishopric all her considerable wealth for pious uses. That aged Pastor was condemned to labour as a common groom in the public stables where horses were kept for the Circus, till, the faithful having succeeded in rescuing him, he became for a time the guest of Lucina, continuing to administer the Sacraments, and address those who flocked to worship, within her house on the Via Lata; hearing of which, Maxentius ordered the oratory in that mansion to be converted into a stable; and the Pontiff, again forced to the same menial offices on the spot where he had acted in his most august capacity, soon sunk under the weight of miseries. The church of *S. Mareello* (first named in the acts of a Council held under Symmachus), rebuilt, as it now stands, in 1519, with the architecture of Sansavino and a façade by Carlo Fontana, still marks the site of his sacred ministration as well as sufferings. Some circumstances of a contest against heresy, followed by persecution and exile, in the story of Pope Eusebius, were brought to light through one of those interesting discoveries in Catacombs due to the zeal of Padre Marchi and De Rossi — namely, a metrical composition found in the



Callixtan cemetery, giving as follows the account of this Pontiff's troubles, owing to some factious teacher named Heraclius, and of his subsequent exile to Sicily, where he died: —

*Heraclius vetuit lapsos peccata dolere,  
Eusebius docuit miseros sua crimina flere;  
Scinditur in partes populus, gliscente furore,  
Seditio, bellum, cædes, discordia, lites.  
Extemplo pariter pulsi feritate tyranni,  
Integra cum rector servaret foedera pacis,  
Pertulit exilium Domino sub iudice lætus,  
Littore Trinacrio mundum vitamque reliquit.*

Melchiades, who witnessed the overthrow of the last Pagan, and the triumph of the first Christian Emperor, has not left a name in any intimate manner associated with the great events enacted during his short pontificate, save in being recipient of the favour which conceded a portion of the imperial palace as the pontific residence.

Of St. Sylvester (legends apart) little is known save his efforts for the interest of discipline and doctrine, the churches he consecrated, and the splendid donations he received for their maintenance: — a holy and zealous man, one of whose first steps was to send legates to a synod convoked by the Emperor at Arles, to decide in the question of the Donatist schism; soon after which he held a Council in the church among the halls of Trajan's *Thermae*, where was determined an economic arrangement indeed commendable for prudence and Catholic charities: that henceforth ecclesiastical property should be divided into four equal portions: — for the episcopal body; for the Clergy in general; for the poor; for the building and maintenance of places of worship—or (as some writers state) into three equal parts—for the Clergy, the sacred edifices, and the poor. Anastasius tells us that Sylvester prescribed the ages requisite for holy orders: 30 for a simple Lector, 35 for a Subdeacon; 37 for a Deacon; 40 for a priest; also requiring that the candidate should pre-

sent good testimonials both from those within and those without the Church, and that the « presbyter » should be the husband of one wife, blessed by a priest (or married with sacred rites) — « unius uxoris virum, uxorem a sacerdote benedictam ». The great ecclesiastical event of this period, the first General Council, held at Nicaea in Bithynia, A. D. 325, with assistance of 318, (or, according to Eusebius, 250), Bishops, many of whom bore trophies of martyrdom on their mutilated bodies—this only pertains to the subject before me in so far as it enters into the story of Christian Rome. Anastasius says the Council was held with the consent of Sylvester; and most Catholic historians represent his two legates as presiding, together with Hosius, Bishop of Cordova; Constantine himself attending in all the splendour of the purple, but leaving the throne to be occupied by the volume of the Gospels, — henceforth an established precedent for like occasions; that sacred book being ever after enthroned in state at such parliaments of the Church. « That at Nicaea » (says Doellinger), « it was Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, who held presidency in quality of Pontific Legate, together with the priests Vitus and Vincentius, cannot be for a moment doubted when we observe the order in which Socrates enumerates the prelates who assisted at that Council ». Dupin and Fleury speak with less certainty on this subject; and Eusebius, assuredly the most reliable authority, as both a witness and actor in the proceedings he describes, leads us to the inference that Constantine himself was honorary president; simply stating, in respect to the part taken by St. Sylvester: « The Bishop of the royal City was absent, on account of his advanced age; but his presbyters attended, who represented him ». So also speaks Theodoret: « The Bishop of Rome—was necessarily absent, but he sent two presbyters to the Council, for the purpose of taking part in all the transactions » (Eccles. Hist. lib. I, cap. VII). To him and other prelates who had been absent was addressed the same letter by Constantine, given by Eusebius, without distinction of any one among their

number ; and indeed the spirit of this age within the Church so reveals itself to us historically that we can scarce suppose the Fathers at Nicaea would have submitted to a presidentship of dictation or control in the name of whatever dignitary. That they acknowledged the imperial as the sole power by which, and under whose protection , they were assembled , is manifest in their own words : « The great and holy Council of Nicaea having been convened by the grace of God , and by the appointment of the most religious Emperor, Constantine », ec. ( Theodoret , lib. 4 , cap. IX ).

The great transaction of this assemblage was the drawing up of that formula , afterwards developed into the sublime profession of faith called « Nicene » , and to this day said or sung in the Latin Mass , by usage speedily adopted at Rome. The Council only declared the already-accepted doctrine ; and through its definition of the nature of the Godhead , immediately directed against that Arian Heresy by which the Church was now rent and agitated , secured one great benefit to intellect as well as to faith , in that it held up to apprehension a definite idea , instead of leaving the e-ssentials of Christian belief in the sphere of conjecture or speculation ; and the characteristic action of the Church , tending to ensure repose and serenity in return for believing acquiescence , is thus early manifest in the loftiest hitherto attempt of the human mind to explain the incomprehensible Infinite (1). One result of the impression made by the Nicene definitions is strikingly apparent in the art of this period ; for to about this date must be referred those sculptures on Christian sarcophagi , where , forgetting the precedents of primitive antiquity , Art takes so

(1) Stanley , in the vivid and impressive picture drawn by him of this Council ( « Lectures on the Eastern Church » ) , leaves the reader under the idea that the legates of Pope Sylvester only held the same rank as those sent by all other prelates who could not personally attend ; that the presidency , in fact , was not conceded to the Roman Bishopric , but exercised by several leading prelates ; and Milman's view accords with this.

high a flight as to introduce the Three Persons of the Trinity alike under human form, and with almost identical type—a mode of representation soon condemned by the juster feeling of the Church, and presently to disappear from her monuments in every class. Throughout the series of sacred mosaics at Rome, between the IV and XIV centuries, the Supreme Being is never represented save symbolically, as by a hand, usually with a crown held over some venerable head, the Saviour's or the Blessed Virgin's; but later was attempted a mostrous and offensive personification of the Triune Deity in a single human figure with three heads or faces—in such representations as are seen at Perugia among other frescoes, probably of the XV century, in two deserted Oratories. The sole instance I am aware of, in which really high art has so disregarded the decorum of treatment, is a fresco by Andrea Del Sarto on the archway above his admirable *Cenacolo* at *S. Salvi* (Florence), representing the Supreme Being in a single head with three beautiful faces! It was well that at last authority interfered to check such abuse: Urban VIII decreed that all images so presenting the ineffable Mystery of the Godhead should be burnt; and Benedict XIV, in a brief addressed to the Bishop of Augsburg, forbid the depicting of the Holy Spirit, as in certain pictures at that time scattered over Germany, under the aspect of a young man. But notwithstanding these prohibitions, we see to this day an anthropomorphism in the treatment of the most sublime subject by Italian Art, perhaps more offensively conspicuous at Rome than any where else, and constituting one of the glaring oppositions between the usage of the primitive and modern Church at that centre.

The short Pontificate of St. Mark left its chief trace in the addition of the Nicene creed to the liturgy, henceforth chanted after the Gospel. Julius I devoted his energies mainly to opposing Arianism through means of two Councils, one at Rome, the other at Sardica, against which measures those heretics opposed a rival « *conciliabulum* », which set the first



example of the pretence to excommunicate the Roman Bishop. Julius had the merit also of initiating a method for the regular compilation of ecclesiastical acts, now undertaken by the « primicerius » of the notaries attached to the Papal service, and in scope admitting all Documents that concern church-interests — « donations, investments, commutations, testaments, traditions, manumissions » (see Anastasius). Under this Pontificate was first introduced the monastic system at Rome, through the influence of St. Athanasius, whose life of St. Anthony the Hermit now became most popular; and during whose sojourn in this City many of both sexes devoted themselves to an ascetic religious retirement, though not, as yet, to the disciplined life of the cloister.

The first care of Liberius was to summon a Council, intended to have been held at Rome, for further measures against the Arians, and for deciding in the case of the persecuted Athanasius, twice banished from his See at Alexandria, and twice restored. That Council actually met at Milan: but, instead of proving by any means a triumph for the Catholic cause, was domineered over by Arian interests, under protection of the Emperor Constantius, who himself presided, and ordered the Legates of the Pope to be expelled. The great object of the Arians now was to get possession of, or depose, the Roman Pontiff; and Constantius charged his chief eunuch with the task of laying snares, through bribes and menaces, against his religious fidelity; all which proving vain, it was at last determined to carry off Liberius by force, in the night-time, from Rome. The narrative of this fact by a Heathen writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, remarkably shows how high the credit of the Pontiff with the popular mind; it being necessary, he states, to remove Liberius by night, in order not to irritate the people. That Pope being violently transported to Milan, the Emperor and his Arian party did their utmost to shake his constancy and extort from him the condemnation of St. Athanasius, but in vain; and finally Constantius resolved to depose and banish him. Thus for the first time

was beheld such outrage against the Holy See and its apostolic Pastor, ordered by a nominally Christian Potentate ! Liberius, loaded with chains, was sent to Beraea in Thrace ; and Felix, a Roman deacon, raised up to succeed him in the Chair of St. Peter. Soon however, Constantius, visiting Rome to celebrate his triumph over the usurper Magnentius, was induced by the voice of public entreaty to restore the legitimate Pontiff ; but his orders were that Liberius should be brought back, and continue to govern the Church *conjointly* with Felix, which decree being published in the Circus Maximus, the people, guided by their just instincts, exclaimed with one voice : *Unus Deus, unus Christus, unus Episcopus !* Liberius had spent two years in exile, suffering every species of humiliation, and perhaps torture, till at last, yielding to transient weakness, he signed the condemnation of Athanasius and the formula of faith insidiously drawn up by the Arians, which, while it owned the Divinity of the Second Person, omitted the term *consubstantial* in defining the nature of the Holy Trinity. Having pacified his persecutors by this apparent concession, Liberius was at last sent back with honour to Rome ; and the imperial letters required the citizens to receive him again as their Pontiff. But many revolted, and, interpreting too severely the concession of Liberius, continued to recognise Felix as his legitimate successor, as now, though at first an intruder, invested with the character of an orthodox Pontiff through an act which had forfeited other claims, leaving the See vacant. Baronius shows that Liberius was not heretical, because the formula he had signed might bear a Catholic sense, though drawn up by adversaries ; and Doellinger considers the Roman clergy were forced to raise up Felix, but perhaps only as an *administrator*, not absolutely ruler of the Church. It is certain that, on the return of Liberius, that perhaps blameless usurper retired into the country, and thenceforth led an edifying life, closed, according to one account, by martyrdom, which he suffered by order of Constantius for daring to excommunicate that prince. The reinstated Pon-

tiff, repentant of his past weakness, displayed zeal and energy ; and when a majority among 400 bishops, at the Council of Rimini (359), were prevailed on by the Arian prelates to subscribe a formula containing the disguised principle of their error, he solemnly condemned the proceeding and symbol, in consequence of which step he was again driven from his See by a heretic Bishop, the creature of Constantius ; and once more did the Roman Church now behold her chief Pastor taking refuge in the Catacombs, where Liberius is said to have remained in concealment till the Emperor's death. One of the five patriarchal Basilicas, called the « Liberian », was founded by this Pontiff, though in the existing edifice (*Santa Maria Maggiore*) remains no portion of the probably much smaller one built in the IV century. The beautiful legend is well known which to this day is commemorated in solemn rites on the 5th of August, when, during High Mass in that splendid Liberian Basilica, showers of white rose-leaves descend from the richly-fretted ceiling, to remind us of the miraculous fall of snow found, on that same day, covering the height of the Esquiline, as indicated in a vision on the previous night both to the Pope and to a patrician named Johannes, the Holy Virgin appearing with injunctions that on that spot should be erected a temple dedicate to her name (1).

As to Felix, neither Baronius nor Muratori place him even on the list of Popes ; and some writers suppose him to have been appointed merely Vicar or Coadjutor of the exiled Pon-

(1) Joannes, having no children, prayed to the Blessed Virgin for divine guidance in his purpose of applying his wealth most acceptably to herself, and for the benefit of his soul. The whole story of the vision, the snow-storm, and the founding of this church, is represented in the mosaics, of the 13th century, still on its façade, though much concealed by the modern portico ; and the Pope tracing the foundations on the snow, is the subject elsewhere represented, in a gilt and silvered relief, over the altar of the magnificent Borghese Chapel in the same basilica, which once bore the name, derived from this legend, « S. Maria della Neve ».

tiff; but the almanack brought out annually at Rome admits his name in the Papal succession, as « St. Felix II, who exercised the Pontific power, during the exile of Liberius, for more than two years, either as Vicar of the latter, or because created Pontiff with his consent, perhaps illegitimately, as some learned men suppose », etc. Under Gregory XIII the congregation for the reform of the Roman martyrology deliberated whether his name should be cancelled, or left without the title of « martyr » among those commemorated; and Baronius, who assisted, gave his vote in that latter sense; but just then occurred an interesting discovery to rehabilitate the memory of Felix. Under the altar of SS. *Cosmo e Damiano*, on the Forum, some labourers, whose object was robbery, found a marble sarcophagus with the relics of three martyrs, and in another compartment, separately, the skeleton of this strangely-destined child of Fortune, with the inscription near: *Corpus S. Felicis Papae et Martiri qui damnavit Constantium* (4). On the vigil of the next festival (29th July), still held in honour of « S. Felix II, Pope and Martyr », at that Franciscan church, those relics were exhumed for more magnificent interment within the same building.

Damasus (revered as a Saint) ascended the papal chair amidst portentous agitations, showing how, even thus early, spiritual power had deflected from its sphere of serene grandeur through association with mundane honours and interests. The election was contested by a deacon, named Ursicinus (or Ursinus), who obtained his illegitimate consecration, a few days after that of Damasus, at the hands of a bishop of Tivoli, and for a time was supported by a faction using armed force; the two parties repeatedly encountering for battle in the streets; and one conflict in a basilica (probably S. Maria

(4) It is true this epigraph has been considered spurious; and in the « *Art de vérifier les dates* », is pointed out the absence of proofs that Felix either condemned Constantius or suffered a Martyr's death.



Maggiore — v. Ammianus Marcellinus) left 137 dead bodies within the consecrated edifice, the doors of which had been burnt, and the roof stript of its tiles during this sacrilegious struggle. That Pagan historian describes the legitimate Pope marching at the head of troops recruited among his clergy, charioteers, and hired gladiators; and adds that, during the entire contest, 160 dead bodies were strewn over the streets, though not one of Damasus's party was slain. The Prefect, unable, with all the force at his command, to suppress this tumult, was obliged to save his life by escaping to some village on the Campagna. The Antipope was at last banished: but the next year (367) contrived to return and resume the contest, till again exiled, after two months, into Gaul. Not even through such legal interposition were the enemies of Damasus put down; and they next attempted a war of calumny, attacking his moral character in charges from which he cleared himself by an exculpatory oath before an ecclesiastical synod. United in bonds of friendship and correspondence with St. Jerome, who acted as his secretary for some years, the esteem and reverence entertained for Damasus by that Doctor of the Latin Church imply a tribute to his virtues, perhaps the best refutation against his calumniators. Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible was approved and recommended for general use in the Latin Church by this Pope; and thus became popular that « Vulgate », still the authorized version in Catholic acceptance, and the study of which the Papacy cannot be accused of discouraging, however adverse to the use of versions in any vulgar tongue, unless provided with notes and comments. The office of Vicars of the Holy See, for distant countries, had origin under this Pontificate. Damasus left a reputation as a writer of merit in prose and verse; but it is through his compositions of the latter class that he is now best known—brief essays, mostly of elegiac character, designed to honour the saintly dead, or the memories attaching to sacred places, these poems are

devotional without being dogmatic, the greater part composed for lapidary inscriptions in churches, or for those subterranean cemeteries whose chapels and sepulchres Damasus had been active in restoring. De Rossi, (*« Roma Sotterranea »*), reports the traces of this Pontiff's undertaking, recognized by him in many Catacombs; and mentions the significant fact, ascertained in his researches, that, during two years (370-1) of Damasus's pontificate, almost all Christian interments at Rome were in those hypogees, though from 364 to 369 the use of subterranean and above-ground sepulchres had continued in about equal proportions. Another of this Pontiff's public works is now represented by the modernized *S. Lorenzo in Damaso*, a basilica rebuilt by him, and enriched with many costly gifts, but whose original structure was destroyed to give place to the actual church attached to the Cancelleria palace, both buildings the architecture of Bramante: this demolition, ordered by a Cardinal Vice-chancellor, Riario, in 1486, depriving Rome of a sacred monument among the stateliest here preserved from Christian antiquity. The stonework and columns having been taken, as supposed, from the adjacent ruins of Pompey's theatre, its interior was divided into a nave with four aisles. Sixty-three parishes were affiliated to it; and near it rose buildings appropriated by Damasus as a hospice for pilgrims of the higher class, where it is probable that St. Jerome, St. Brigida of Sweden, and several Oriental monks were lodged during their stay in Rome. One tradition is that St. Jerome was the first Cardinal Titular of this basilica; but the office held by that Saint at the Papal court had little analogy with any attribute of the modern Cardinalate. The palace and church of *S. Lorenzo* being confiscated from Cardinal Riario, the Apostolic Chancery was located here, by Leo X, after the revealing of a conspiracy in which that Cardinal had been compromised: and this sacred edifice was again modernized, to the prejudice of Bramante's work, in 1577. Its original found-

er commenced his pontificate with a historic tragedy; and one of the most tragically-momentous events in modern Roman history, the murder of Count Rossi, prime minister under Pius IX, in November 1848, has attached another gloomy association to *S. Lorenzo in Damaso*.

To the period of this pontificate refers a most curious testimony from a Pagan respecting the manners and externals of the Papacy. In such reference the report of an adversary might perhaps be set aside, if his tone were altogether hostile; but when an intelligent witness, external to the Church, deposes both in her favour and disfavour as a calm spectator, we must allow his document to possess authority. Alluding to the Roman Bishopric, Ammianus Marcellinus says (l. XXVII, c. 2): — « As for me, considering the modern pomp with which those who hold that dignity live at Rome, I am not at all surprised that they who aspire to it should use every art and effort in order to its attainment. For, having once secured this rank, they are certain to become enriched in the extreme through the oblations of devout Roman matrons; and to be enabled, at their pleasure, to drive about the City in chariots, magnificently vested; also to keep an excellent table, where they may give banquets so sumptuous as to leave those of kings and emperors behind. Meanwhile they do not consider that they might be truly happy if, instead of availing themselves of the pretext that grandeur and magnificence are requisite at Rome, by way of excuse for these excesses, they were to determine on reforming their lives, therein following the example of several bishops in the provinces, who, by wise frugality in food and drink, by going about in poor raiment, with eyes cast down humbly to earth, render the purity of their morals, the modesty of their deportment venerable and acceptable not less to the eternal God than to His true worshippers ». — Accordant with this testimony is the anecdote given by St. Jerome (*Epist.* 61) of the Prefect, and once Proconsul, Praetextatus, who, on being exhorted by Damasus to embrace the true

religion, jestingly answered: « Make me Bishop of Rome and I will become a Christian at once! »

On the election of Sirius (or Siricius), 385, the restless spirit of Ursinus again conceived hopes of winning the envied prize; and returning from exile, he again strove in vain to occupy the Holy See. Sirius is said to have been first to adopt the title « Papa » in a decretal, the earliest papal document of this description extant. To him also is attributed the first positive decree, requiring the celibacy of ecclesiastics, a discipline which, it is evident, had long been demanded by moral feeling as the decorous condition, before being strictly enforced as the obligation of the Clergy; and so early as A. D. 305 the Spanish Council of Elvira had anticipated the Papal enactment by ordering that those ecclesiastics who were married should live as the unmarried — *abstinere se a conjugibus suis*. In the East the celibate life seems, from the testimony of Eusebius, Jerome, Chrysostom, etc., to have been almost universally that of the priesthood during the IV century; and at the Nicene Council the urgencies of an austere bishop, Paphnutius, induced the fathers to restore a disciplinary law (therefore, we must suppose, previously enacted, but already fallen into neglect), which required those who had not married before ordination as deacons, priests, or bishops, to remain single, but did not oblige those who had married whilst in the laic state, to separate from their wives after ordination—nothing else, in fact, than the observance at this day carried out in the Greek, herein opposed to the Latin Church (Alzog. v. I, c. 3, 127; Milman, B. IV, c. I) (1).

(1) The « Apostolic Canons » contain the following (L): « If any Bishop, Priest, Deacon, or any other person in the sacred category abstain from marriage, from meat, or wine, *not* for the sake of ascetism but because abominating these things, forgetting that they are all very good, and that God created man male and female, he thereby blasphemously calumniating the Divine creation, let him be corrected or deposed; so likewise any layman ». Of the eighty-four Canons in this collection, Baronius and Bellarmine ascribe the



The successor of Sirius, Anastasius, is eulogized by St. Jerome as an « illustrious man », whom Rome did not deserve to possess, and who, after four years, was, happily for himself, removed by death before witnessing the tremendous disaster brought on the ancient Capital by Alaric.

Full of meaning and moral is the record of this eventful epoch, conveyed in the well-known Legend of St. Sylvester, that later supplied many subjects for art; and in such examples we must acknowledge the high value of the Christian Legend, as illustrating the story of thought. The one in question has been treated by mediaeval and modern painting: and its earliest artistic presentment, at Rome, is in the very curious frescoes, probably of the XIII century, in the chapel of St. Sylvester entered from the atrium of SS. *Quattro Coronati*. In later and less interesting works, it is the subject of frescoes by Nogari, Roncalli and Baglioni (XVI century) on the attic of the transept at the Lateran; and an indifferent modern picture represents the romantic episode of the Dragon driven by the saintly Pope, through virtue of the Cross, into the infernal abyss, thence never to return, at *St. Maria Liberatrice*, a church on the Forum, whose title has reference to the tradition that the den into which Sylvester drove back that monster, after many victims had been struck dead by its pestilential breath, yawned nearly opposite the entrance to the present building, beneath those beautiful columns, sole remnant of the Curia-Julia, or Senate House. Hence has the chained Dragon become the companion to the figure of this Pope in art; as a similar symbolism is given to St. George and St. Margaret. Baronius ingeniously maintains that some basis of fact may be found for this story; that a serpent fed and revered in the temple of Æsculapius, on the Island of the Tiber, was actually imprisoned, to perish in first fifty to the Apostles. Dupin concludes that their contents are generally accordant with the discipline, at least in several churches, of the 2nd and 3rd centuries; and certainly, as evidence to primitive usage, they may be allowed weight.

some cavern, by Sylvester, in order thus to strike at the root of one among the many idolatries still popular at Rome. So late as the IX century a similar legend appears, connected with Pope Leo IV, who is said to have driven away for ever by holy charms a horrible serpent, whose poisonous breath slew all approaching, after it had issued from a profound cavern near *St. Lucia* on the Esquiline Hill (v. Anastasius and Baronius, *anno* 324). The Dragon typifies Pagan Superstition; its power to kill by its breath, the moral ruin caused by an impure idolatry; and the chains and cross are intelligible emblems of the means by which such foes were vanquished. A more thrilling episode in the « Acts of St. Sylvester » is that which describes the oration of Constantine, enjoining the Roman people to embrace Christianity, and the enthusiastically acquiescent response of his auditors — a multitude convoked in the Ulpian Basilica, to consider the most momentous interest that ever occupied the Roman mind. After the Emperor's address, pointing out the follies of Paganism and the Divine superiority of the new Religion, the people burst into fervent applause with acclamations kept up for two hours: « Perish all who deny the Christ! Other God is there none save that of the Christians! They who adore not Christ are the enemies of the Caesar! Let the priests of the temples be expelled; let temples be shut and churches opened! He who has saved our Augustus — he is the true God! Long live the worshippers of Christ!» To which Constantine rejoined, that the service of God should be voluntary; that even those who resisted the truth should not forfeit his favour, though his most ardent desire was to find all his subjects deserve his affection by following his religious example. In returning to his palace after that magnificent scene, he was accompanied by a multitude with torches; and the whole City blazed that night with an illumination for the purest triumph ever won by Roman Emperor. Although this legend is without claim to a place in the historic narration — is indeed contradictory to an accumulation of evidence from writings and

monuments; so that we can only regard it as offspring of the certain consciousness of permanent triumph attained much later by the Church in Rome—still, when we bear in mind that belief is the soul of fact, that the predominance of an idea is among those high realities entitled to every historian's regard, we cannot but feel a deeper interest reflected from this impressive scene, lingering with a light of moral splendour, upon those ruins of Trajan's Forum yet so imperfectly disinterred.

Before we turn away from the records of the IV century, we may consider one curious and rude evidence of the deep decline of art, in the reputed mitre of St. Sylvester, with the group, on a tissue of silk and gold, of the Blessed Virgin and Child, between six Angels clad in dalmatics; the Mother holding an olive-branch; the head of the Child with a nimbus of hexagonal form; seven stars around, and the words below: *Ave Regina Cæli*. So barbaric, indeed ludicrous, is the design, that one might more safely refer it to the darkest period of the Middle Ages—whatever be the credit due to the tradition that St. Sylvester was the first Latin Bishop to assume the mitre, although that episcopal symbol is known not to have become common till some centuries later. Amid the pomps of Easter at St. Peter's, after the exulting music of the Vespers on Monday in that week, we obtain a distant view of another art-object, also referred by tradition to the time of Constantine, now exposed, with countless relics, from a balcony under the cupola, and announced, in resonant chant by an officiating Canon, as the portraits of SS. Peter and Paul possessed by Pope Sylvester—a display reminding of the circumstances in this Pope's legend immediately connected with the legend of the Emperor's conversion. Constantine, while yet in the darkness of Paganism, and even a persecutor of the Church, was struck with leprosy in judgment for his sins; consulting his augurs, he received the answer that he could only be cured by a bath in the blood of infants; but the mothers, whose children were to be sacrificed, so moved his heart that he revoked the sanguinary order, and

sent them to their homes laden with presents. On the following night the two chief Apostles appeared to him intimating that the real cure for his malady would be another species of bath to be administered by the man of God, Sylvester, then concealed in a cavern on Mount Soracte, whither he had fled from persecution. Immediately were sent emissaries to find that holy man; and Sylvester, concluding they had come to inflict death, said to the clergy who had fled to that mountain with him: « Behold now is the accepted time: now is the day of salvation ». Brought to the imperial palace. Constantine asked him, who were those gods, named Peter and Paul, thus gracious in their promises on his behalf? « They are no gods (answered Sylvester), but servants and Apostles of Jesus Christ »: learning which the Emperor desired to see their portraits, and the Pontiff sent a deacon to bring the authentic effigies of the two Apostles, then in his possession. Looking at that picture, Constantine marvelled greatly, for he there recognized the persons beheld in his vision; and by this means being enlightened to see heavenly truth, he listened to Sylvester's instructions; prepared himself for baptism; and in receiving that sacrament was not only cleansed of his sins, but miraculously cured of his leprosy! As to those likenesses of the Apostles, Baronius says that « the images shown on that occasion by St. Sylvester to Constantine, are preserved to this day, with much veneration, in the Vatican » (1).

Legends, an index to the conditions of the inner life, should not be forgotten in our studies of any momentous epoch. Those relating to the Nicene Council strikingly ex-

(1) Such legends as refer to the *Volto Santo* (exposed in Holy Week at St. Peter's), the Crucifix of Nicodemus (at Lucca), and the image sent to king Abgarus at Edessa, are too slight to be worthy of refutation; and not less baseless than the reputed Madonna-pictures of St. Luke. That the primitive Christians were well aware no portrait existed with claims to be the genuine likeness of their Divine Lord is evident from the words of St. Augustine: *Qua fuerit Christus facie nos penitus ignoramus* (*De Trinit.* lib. VII, cap. 4).



press the popular feelings that grew in reverence around the idea of that august assemblage. Among the bishops convened were two who died during the sessions. When the day came for all to sign the orthodox symbol, places were left for the names wanting; the document being sealed, the dead were invoked, and the survivors kept vigil all night around that sacred scroll: the next morning the two signatures were found in their place, beside the attestation: « We fully accord with the holy oecumenic Council, and, although removed from earth, have signed the symbol with our own hands ». A Coptic MS. narrative of the event gives the statement that, after 318 bishops had been seated to deliberate, when they rose to vote their number proved to be 319: which seemed unaccountable till, at last, it became apparent that the Holy Spirit had visibly intervened to aid in the solemn definition of Catholic Truth!

Acquaintance with the developements and meanings of things external avails for the understanding of details that henceforth become frequent in sacred art. Primitive worship was, as we have been, simple, pure, intelligible. With the reports of its character in earlier times we may now confront what authorities state respecting its more majestic and complex celebration in the IV century. St. Cyrll of Jerusalem supplies the fullest details (*Mystagog. V*) as to the sacramental rite which had already been called « Missa », (hence « Mass » — the Latin term being first used in that sense by St. Ambrose, Ep. LIV, date 385); mentioning in due order—the preparatory ablutions at the altar (significant of the purification of the soul for holiest ministry), the kiss of peace, the chanted preface beginning with the exhortation, « Lift up your hearts »; the *sanctus*; the consecration, followed by prayers for the universal Church, for Rulers, the sick and afflicted, and the faithful departed; finally, the general communion in both kinds, all receiving the Host in the right, laid across the left, hand; all present being invited to the altar in words sung to heavenly music, « Taste and see that Christ is the

Lord » (1). Much analogy with the Latin High Mass of the present day is here apparent; and yet the discrepancies are also marked; though the doctrine of the Real Presence is emphatically enounced by St. Cyril, no mention is made of the elevation or adoration of the Eucharist; and the Communion of all present in both kinds appears to have been invariable, indeed obligatory. The Clergy officiated in long white vestments (see the ancient mosaics in Rome's churches), over which a *pallium* (or woollen band studded with black crosses) was worn by the bishop, not otherwise distinguished as yet either by mitre or crozier (2). Incense sent up its fragrant cloud, emblem of the sentiment that adores and the rite that consecrates; precious balsams burned in the sanctuary; and a profusion of lights from candelabra or pendant lamps (around and above, but not upon, the altar) illumined the sacred scene. The consecration was usually in unleavened bread, and wine with a little water, set apart out of the oblations made by the faithful for such use, and for the support of their ministers; offerings which were in various kinds,

(1) St. Augustine («Confessions») is the first to mention the exquisite beauty of the vocal music now introduced in public worship: «How many tears have I shed in listening to the hymns and sacred chants that swelled forth with touching fervour in Thy temple, O Lord! and, whilst they sweetly entered the ear, caused the truth of the words thus sung to insinuate itself into my heart». It was in the Milanese Church that the chant had been thus perfected by St. Ambrose, who first adapted it to notes of different quantities in a method afterwards superseded by that of St. Gregory, the «Gregorian», which eventually prevailed wherever the Latin rite extended.

(2) A plain wooden staff is believed (see Baronius) to have been thus early in use, representing the crozier, in the hand of the officiating bishop. About the beginning of the VI century that object began to be adorned with gold; and at last the precious crozier in mediæval use was entirely of ivory, gold, silver, or metal gilt. Because considered a symbol of delegated authority, the crozier is not held by the Pope, who owns no superior on earth.

corn and oil, birds, fruit, legumes, milk, honey, besides bread, wine, and incense; sometimes also in money; these offerings not being brought into the church, but into the *oblationarium* (or *gazophylacium*), where the deacons examined them to ascertain whether they were worthy — that is, presented by worthy subjects. The Eucharist, in one kind, was reserved either in a silver tabernacle, or pendant dove of some precious material (as above noticed), thus to be ready, as required, for the communion of the sick or captives; travellers also being allowed to carry it with them on long journies for a participation which, of course, was private; and the Hermits of the desert had the frequent privilege of retaining it in their solitude. How ancient the practice of reserving the holy Eucharist, and sending it to those unable to communicate in public worship, appears from the affecting story of the young martyr, an acolyte (see « Acts of Pope St. Stephen »), who was beaten to death in a Roman street for refusing to discover that sacred object he had been entrusted to convey, and which his persecutors sought for in vain on his person! The communion in one kind, that of the cup, seems to have been early adopted for children; in other cases but rarely, and within a few dioceses alone; indeed reprobated by high authority, as even by a Pope, Paschal II, so late as the year 1110, who *commands* that, except to infants and the sick, the Eucharist should be given in both kinds, condemning the opposite practice because « a human and novel invention » (*humana et novella institutio*).

Liturgies, it is evident, were, for the first three centuries, handed down to use in the several churches, different though all formed on a common type, without being ever drawn up in writing; in this respect liberty being the rule, the large constitution of the primitive Church allowing each bishop to compose a new or alter an ancient liturgy for his diocese without reference to other arbitration. Thus was the formula of the Milanese church amplified, though not originally written, by St. Ambrose, whose name it still

bears; that of Poitier by St. Hilary; and at Rome was used the *sacramentarium* in part composed by Pope Gelasius, but in its nucleus of still earlier origin; the passage in the actual Latin Mass from « te igitur quaesumus » to the Pater Noster, being entirely ascribed to that venerable author.

The *Agapae*, with which the celebration of the Eucharist had been blended in primitive times, was for ever separated from that holier ordinance, owing to abuses become scandalous even in the second century; but the fraternal banquet was much longer kept up as a species of hospitality bestowed by bishops or pious benefactors on the poorer brethren. Such a banquet is vividly described in a *carmen* of St. Paulinus, who himself gave one to his flock at Nola, for the festival of St. Felix. St. Augustine and St. Ambrose severely denounce the abuses that had crept into the *Agapae* before or during the IV century; but it is certain that till the VI century such banquets were frequently given in the porticoes of churches or in cemeteries. A Council at Carthage (397) forbade the Clergy to attend them; two other Councils (in 372 and 393) prohibited their celebration at least within the sacred building; and so late as the beginning of the VIII century, the council of Trulla (at Constantinople) reprobated the still existing practice of spreading tables for the feast in churches. It appears that the banquet once associated with the most solemn Christian ordinance, gradually lost all sacred character, and became an occasion for fairs, markets, gatherings of traders and idlers. At Antioch dancing was introduced even into the church, as still kept up in the cathedral of Seville for the Corpus Domini Festival.

The Eucharistic Rite was not from earliest times of daily recurrence; but in the second century certainly held thrice a week, and always on the Sunday; and in the IV century the eastern Church added another, the Saturday's celebration, not long afterwards adopting the quotidian. In the West the practice long continued different in the several dioceses, some having the daily, others the weekly, or bi-weekly celebration



(St. Augustine, Epist. LIV). The African and Spanish churches first followed the example of the East; till at last, in the VI century, the « daily sacrifice » become the universal observance of Christian worship. That this most sacred solemnization was from the first the supreme object and leading transaction, the very focus around which all public devotion centered in the primitive Church, the only public rite indeed on which attendance was of universal obligation, *this* is one of the points most luminously conspicuous. That sacrament having been the holiest link in the spiritual chain, the distinguishing symbol and tie among the worshippers of the crucified God, to allow its retirement into a subordinate place, where it ceases to be the constantly recurring memorial rite, is the farthest possible departure both from the mind and practice of ancient Christianity. Not only did the distinction of those services at the altar into *Missa Fidelium* and *Missa Catechumenorum*, but also the public confession of sins still prevail in the IV century, whether or not the *private* confession (as certain writers assume) always preceded; or that it was only after the scandal had been public that the act of penitence was required to be so alike. « If the sin have been secret (says St. Augustine, *Sermo* 83), correct it in secret; if public and open, correct it publicly, that he (the offender) may be reformed, and that others may fear » (1).

(1) The evidence for the practice of confession from the IV century becomes quite conclusive, and cannot be rejected by any impartial inquirer. What is open to question, and scarcely to be established on testimony alike distinct, is the penitential system of earlier ages. That in the second and third centuries the act, then called *exomologesis*, was sometimes private, addressed to a priest, though more commonly public before the assembled faithful, seems certainly implied by Tertullian (*de Poenitent*), by Origen (*Homil. in psalm.* 37), and by St. Cyril (*de lapsis*). It is supposed that private confessors were first appointed during the Decian persecution (249-54); and the public confessing before the Church, longer retained in the West than in the East, was in the first instance abolished at Constantinople, A. D. 390, owing to some scandal given by such a re-

Baptism became also invested with new symbols and formulas : the use of exorcised chrism for anointing the forehead, ears, eyes, and breast, also of salt to be placed on the tongue; the clothing of the neophyte in white robes, and, after the triple immersion of the whole person (the indispensable form in which alone this sacrament could be administered), the feeding with a mixture of milk and honey, or, as in some Churches observed, the usage of giving a gold coin (*denarius*) to each newly-baptized. The anointing of those in dangerous illness is attested in the practice of the western Church by St. Augustine; of the eastern, by St Chrysostom. And the Christian funeral now also acquired increasing solemnity : the Bishop and his Clergy going to the house of mourning to pray over, and pour oil on, the dead; the mourners keeping vigil, either in the house or in the cemetery; and if the interment took place in the forenoon, sacramental rites accompanying it; as also on the anniversaries of decease, when what is known in modern phrase as the Requiem Mass would be celebrated. Prayer for the dead certainly prevailed, and took established form, at a very ancient period—attested in the words of Tertullian (*De Corona*) : « We make oblations for the dead on

velation there openly made. After the peace secured to the Church, 312, the usage began to be regulated by discipline, instead of being left to individual conscience. It became customary to confess on the first Sunday in Lent; but not till ancient fervour had waxed cold did ecclesiastical dictation interpose: in the IX century the bishops required either two or three confessions during the year; and at last the single annual confession, still obligatory, was enjoined by the Lateran Council under Innocent I<sup>st</sup>, in 4245. The Confessional has been, and is liable to be, grievously abused. In Italy, at the present day, many (not without cause) are alienated from it; for, in well-known instances, it has been perverted to serve political ends; but its total suppression, instead of the modified practice intended by certain reformers, has involved the abandonment of the most potent agency ever wielded over the human conscience, of functions essentially sacerdotal, and of what is to thousands a source of consolation and strengthening influence.

the days of their anniversary ». At solemn Mass *their* names, together with those of all the living entitled to the Church's prayers, used to be read from the « diptych » by some subordinate minister. The veneration and exposition of Relics in churches, and the habit of keeping such objects about the person, seems to have become quite common about this period. St. Paulinus (*Ep.* XI) sends to Sulpicius Severus a relic of the true Cross in a golden case; and hazards the assertion that the principal portion of that holy tree, kept at Jerusalem since St. Helena's discovery, had the property of never diminishing, though fragments were often distributed by the diocesan to pious applicants! At that city, we learn from the same distinguished writer, it was now the practice to expose this most revered of Relics during worship on Good Friday—earliest example perhaps of the « Adoration of the Cross », now accompanied with the sublime chant of the *Improperia*, to Palestrina's setting, in the deeply pathetic observances of that day. The discovery of the Cross, no doubt, confirmed this direction of devout regards to material objects, preparing the way for so much of abuse and folly; if it did not (as Milman concludes) « at once materialise the spiritual worship of Christianity ». The emblem of Redemption was not truly honoured in being made the standard of battle; and Constantine only revived the Pagan superstition of charms and spells by converting one of the nails supposed to have pierced the sacred Body into a bit for his war-horse! Small caskets (*encolpiae*) sometimes of gold, and cruciform, containing either a Relic, or (with juster piety) a copy of the Gospels, used to be worn round the neck (1). And the oil from lamps at the sanctuaries of Jerusalem, or from those that ever burned at the tombs of Apostles, especially from the « confessional » of St. Peter, was now eagerly sought, and sent to the remotest

(1) A beautiful *encolpia* of gold, in form of a cross, was lately found in a tomb at S. Lorenzo on the Tiburtine Way, and is now at the Christian Museum of the Vatican.

countries. Not only in every altar, but in the portals of churches were relics now inserted, there to be ki-sed by the devout before entering. And so early did abuses arise from the dishonest practising upon this natural, indeed blameless feeling, that a law of Theodosius (386) was directed against the sale of Martyrs' relics by itinerant monks—perhaps little better than vagabond impostors, — who had already found such trade lucrative! The veneration for Saints, another form of piety now acquiring distinctness and prevalence, is strikingly evident in the poems and letters of St. Paulinus, who describes (*Ep.* 36) how a pilot was saved from shipwreck by the protection of St. Felix, visibly intervening, together with the Saviour Himself in palpable presence! And in that Prelate-poet's regard the same saint appears exalted to the rank of a guardian-angel over the diocese of Nola; at which cathedral he describes (*Carm. in S. Felicem*) the brilliant observances in his honour, the votive offerings, tapers of painted wax, ointments, silver tablets, embroidered hangings, and above all, the festive Agapae, in a manner that almost foreshadows the devotions of modern Naples to St. Januarius. Yet, in these earlier aspirations, we recognise a far more pure and rational feeling than in the saint-worship of later days: for there is a perpetual reference to the Eternal King of all saints in the affectionate regard for His Martyrs or Confessors.

A new festival introduced in the V century, probably by Pope Gelasius, the « Purification », or « Candlemas », with the blessing and processional carrying of tapers, to commemorate the progress of Mary and Joseph with the Divine Child to the Temple, was appointed in the immediate intent of superseding the Lupercals (held on the same day) by substitution of another, a spectacular and attractive, whilst edifying solemnity; but not with the desired result of at once driving from the field those spasmodic efforts of the now-mortally-wounded Paganism. In consequence of the signal privileges and wealth conferred upon the Clergy, their profession became naturally so



esteemed as to be the favourite among all careers, and their numbers rose to excess; civil offices were deserted; the townspeople reclaimed against a growing evil; and so early as A. D. 320 it was decreed that the priesthood of each city should not exceed a fixed number, that only the places vacant by death should be open to new candidates, and that none of the wealthier citizens should be admitted into the ecclesiastical ranks (Code Theodos. XVI, tit. 2). Superficial indeed would be the view that accounted for their increasing prerogatives as the result of ambitious effort or intrigue on the part of the Clergy themselves. It was the growing sense of the awful importance of their functions, the profound religious feeling now centered around the sacramental system, the public conscience, in fact, that *forced* such honours upon the ministers of the sanctuary, and required that those who stood between man and his Maker, to reconcile and propitiate, should stand apart, distinguished in all things from other mortals.

The law for the observance of the Sunday (321) permitted necessary labour in the fields, and certainly did not derive from any sense of Judaic obligations; for the Mosaic « Sabbath » was utterly remote from the sphere of religious duties and ideas in the ancient Church, — perhaps never even thought of before its revival by modern Protestantism. Another judicious and tolerant law, of about the same date, was that regulating the devotions of those in the Army who had not become Christians: on the first day in the week they were to be led into some plain near the city, and there taught to repeat, with uplifted arms, a Latin form of prayer to the Supreme God, author of victories and bestower of prosperity on the Emperor.

It would be quite beyond my limits to attempt, even in reference to a single century, the analysis of that Christian Literature now become so opulent and splendid; but I may permit myself to dwell, in passing, on the imaginative and poetic sphere of intellectual produce, which left an impress

on the artistic monuments I have undertaken to describe. The ancient lives of the Hermits of the Oriental deserts, many written within this period, abound in striking and marvellous incident, and portraiture of ascetic devotion lit by moral beauty, as well as diversified by glimpses of Nature in wildly picturesque foreground. The desert of Nitria, during this century, was peopled by 5000 cenobites; and the entire numbers of those following that rule or the austerer anchorite life, in Egypt alone, amounted to 76,000 males, 27,700 females—almost equalled by the ascetic populations in Syria, Cappadocia, and provinces bordering on Persia. In the records of such lives we are reminded, from time to time, that in following an artificial, self chosen standard, devotedly accepted as it might be with purest intentions, those anchorites sometimes fell below the nobler ideal of humanity, or exposed themselves to worse dangers than any they had fled from. A redundant source of poetic and pictorial suggestion is found in the Apocryphal Gospels, some of which were cited with reliance by fathers of the III century; and one, the « Gospel according to the Hebrews », was translated by St. Jerome both into Greek and Latin. Among the number of these devout fictions, some were ascribed to St. Peter, St. James, and other Apostles; and many are supposed the forgeries of heretical writers, who sought thus to support favourite theories. One of the few still extant is the « Proto-Evangelium », ascribed to St. James, the source of all those legends about Joachim and Anna, and the early life of Mary, that have supplied such happy subjects for Art from the dawn of the Italian schools, and have perhaps their finest illustration in the frescoes by Ghirlandaio at *S. Maria Novella* (Florence).

Here we become acquainted with those beautiful scenes added to the historic life of the blessed Virgin: her presentation, received by the High Priest, while yet an infant, at the Temple, to be there dedicated to a religious life, like a nun, serving in the sacred courts, and daily nurtured by Angels! her consignment to Joseph, not for marriage, but

for a responsible guardianship, the holy maiden to remain still a creature set apart from all wordly ties or obligations; the rivalship of the suitors before her espousals, and the preternatural sign on Joseph's rod—not the budding of the withered stem (as Art usually makes it), but the appearance of a dove, flying from its top to the head of the chosen spouse! The « Gospel of the Passion and Resurrection », attributed to Nicodemus, possesses a more awful, an intensely tragic interest, and fills up the genuine narrative of those mysterious sufferings with many thrilling details, in their completeness a drama most solemnly impressive. Here we recognise another highly suggestive subject, of which Art has availed itself with great effect: the Descent into Limbo, the discomfiture of Satan, and liberation of the captive-spirits, Patriarchs and Saints of the Old Testament, whose jubilant welcome to the Divine Deliverer, and mystic dialogues in anticipation of His advent, are examples of the bold venture of imagination into domains left by Christianity under veils impenetrable to human knowledge. One of the earliest Christian Poems in Latin is the « *Evangelicæ Historiæ* », in four books, by Juvencus, a paraphrase of the Gospels with full but far from imaginative presentment of all incidents and discourses in the Saviour's life upon earth; almost timid in scrupulous adherence to the sacred text; though the sublime narrative often becomes frigid in such trammels of classic metre, and occasional expressions such as, « *proles veneranda Tonantis* », startle us in verse otherwise free from all Pagan admixture. This poem of the IV century serves at least to prove the familiarity with the Scriptures that must have prevailed among those to whom it was addressed. Not only ideas deriving from the sacred books and the belief, but also from the ritual of the Church pervade the pages of these earliest Christian poets. The hymns soon adapted, and in many instances still retained, for the worship of Latin Catholicism, are admirable for condensed expression of devotional meaning, that often rises into lyric grandeur; and primordial doctrines of Christianity are supported by the testimony found in these metrical effu-

sions. Thus from Juvencus, as well as from the far more resplendent verse of Prudentius, and the amiable Paulinus, may we select numerous tokens of faith respecting the Supreme Being in Three Persons, and the Incarnation of the Saviour; and an anonymous writer of the III century refers to hymns then popular as testifying to the belief in the truly Divine and truly human Nature of Christ. It was with this sense of their theologic importance that certain Councils (as that of Toledo, in 633) formally sanctioned the introduction of hymns at worship; though others indeed (at Laodicea about 372; at Braga, 501) decided in opposite sense, allowing only the canonical Psalms to be sung. Among the earliest Greek Christian hymns extant are those by Synesius (bishop of Ptolemais, 440), which breathe a spirit of Platonic piety, vigorous and vibrating in utterance, but reconciled with the acceptance of Catholic doctrine. Be it remembered that their genial independent-minded author, when induced reluctantly to accept a bishopric, would submit to no separation from a much-loved wife; and that he gave one of the worthiest examples of the exercise of high functions in laying under sentence of excommunication, with all the Church's most awful penalties, a cruel provincial Prefect, whom he solemnly inhibited all other prelates (not excepting either Roman or Alexandrian) from receiving again into communion! The hymns of St. Ambrose were soon and widely admitted into congregational use; many of these beautiful lyrics being still found in the Roman Breviary, and still heard in the rich chant of the Latin Vespers — e. g. *Lucis Creator optime; Te lucis ante terminum; Conditor alme siderum*. And, if unequal, the merits of all from his pen entitle them to rank among the finest effusions of purely Christian inspiration yet given birth to. A symbolisation of the works of nature, supplying quite a new element for poetry, appears in their verse: — the visible world becomes as the mirror of Deity, its forms consecrated into types of the eternal architect. The sentiment of one spiritual presence pervading all things, towards which all converge, is here the dominating principle, that naturally proceeds from and an-



nounces a Religion monotheistic. No poet could be called more strictly theological than Prudentius. The idea of Deity is the very source of his inspiration; and his muse, setting aside all associations of Paganism, finds in the contemplation of the Infinite the treasurehouse of thought, feeling, and imagery. Immortal hope and life, existence glorified amid the company of Angels, in the light and presence of God, these were the objects on which his mind habitually dwelt, drawing thence themes to elevate, to move or delight. The earthly beautiful is only referred to as consecrated to the expression of divine truth; amid the splendours of the Christian temple, the magnificence of nature is only remembered because affording types of creative Might and Love. His Poem on the Passion of St. Agnes presents vivid pictures of beatified existence; that on the Martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul well reflects the beauties lavished on the ceremonial and sanctuaries of the Church; that on St. Laurence associates the sentiment of Roman patriotism with the idea that the Imperial City was still to be Empress of the World by faith, as once by conquest; in that on St. Romanus, Paganism is contrasted in its darkest, most revolting colours with Christianity. The series called « Cathemerion », breathe exalted piety without fanaticism, and sensibilities for innocent enjoyment tempered by the constant reference of acts and intentions to Deity. The « Contra Symmachum », last elaborate refutation, as I believe, of that Paganism now scarce worth such effort from its foes, is still interesting in so far as it illustrates a momentous epoch of transition, though referring to a contest almost at an end; and here we find one of the first utterances of an idea since admitted by general consent into the philosophy of History: that the triumphs and dominion of Rome were appointed by Divine guidance in order to prepare the world for the reign of the Religion destined to become universal:

— Christo jam tunc venienti

Crede, parata via est, quam dudum publica nostrae  
Paci amicitia struxit moderamine Roma.

Paulinus, bishop of Nola, gives startling precedent for the direction of devout regards to human objects, but is, not the less, a true poet; universal in sympathies, open to all impressions of beauty, joy, and sorrow; in style either elevated or pleasingly simple as his theme requires. His enthusiasm at times lifts him on wings of seraphic extasy; but he does not exclusively dwell within sacred precincts, introducing us likewise to his domestic life, his friendships, journeys, and personal interests. In his poetic epistles to Ausonius he shows that friendship and mutual esteem could exist between a Christian and a Pagan, both alike superior in gifts and culture; and in one of these letters (*tertia*) the conviction that love may survive death, immortal as the soul itself, announces the new and nobler impress given to human affection by Christianity. Comparing this school of Poetry in general with that so splendidly distinguished under the ancient Empire, we are struck not alone by novelty in themes and images, but by the new standing-point where Intellect asserts its higher place. It is as though another day had dawned upon the moral world, reversing views and interests, suffusing earth's scenes with purer light than that known to the past, illumining where all had once been gloom, or doubt and sadness: the life-giving Truth is that which chastens desires and enobles sentiments; the Cross is the sign that now begins to guide the thought while it solemnizes the feelings —

To cast o'er hope and memory,  
O'er life and death, its awful charm.

In following the development of public charities at Rome it is interesting to remember that the first hospital was founded there by the patrician matron Fabiola (the heroine of a well-known historic romance), who opened an asylum at her expense for the sick and homeless paupers, the wretched wanderers of the streets (St. Jerome, letter 77). Those *noso-comia*, which sprung up in many cities under Constantine,

were invariably administered by the bishops, and usually stood beside their residences; not like our modern hospitals in presenting the character of architectural unity, but nothing else than an aggregate of small independant buildings, where each inmate lived apart. Such was the asylum Saint Basil founded outside the walls of Caesarea, his episcopal see, « like another town », as St. Gregory Nazianzen describes. Some bishops converted their own houses into such places of refuge; and St. Augustine used to sit at table with the patients and paupers under his fatherly care (1).

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#### CHRONOLOGY OF MONUMENTS.

Basilica of the Saviour (the Lateran), of St. Peter (the Vatican), of St. Paul (the Ostian), of the Cross (the Sessorian); of St. Agnes, St. Laurence, SS. Peter and Marcellinus, founded 314-330 Oratory in the *Thermae* of Trajan (below *San Martino ai Monti*); St. Paul's rebuilt, 386. In latter half of the century — SS. John and Paul (Coelian Hill); St. Eusebius (site of that Pope's house); St. Clement; *S. Maria ad Nives* (*S. Maria Maggiore*), and (probably) St. Alexander (Nomentan Way); Cathedral and Baptistery of Ravenna, about 380; Cathedral and Baptistery of Novara; *S. Tommaso in Limine*, Bergamo.

4) St. Paulinus, Letters and Poems; St. Jerome, Letters, Life of St. Paul the Hermit; Sulpicius Severus, Lives of the Fathers of the Desert — for the legends of St. Sylvester and St. Helena, v. « *Legenda aurea* » (where, in the story of the finding of the Cross, the miracle that attests the true relic is the raising of a dead man to life); Villemain, « *Eloquence Chrétienne au IVme siècle* »; Stanley, « *Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church* »; Cantù, « *Storia Universale* »: for Ritual, Martene, « *de Antiq. Eccles. Ritibus* », Alzog, Martigny; Maringola, « *Antiq. Christ. Institutiones* » — a recent work of much value. (In these notes I mention writings of successive ages, not with a view to giving complete lists, but merely with selection of such as throw particular light on manners or religious usages).

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## V.

### The Fall of Empire.

THE momentous events of the epoch we are now entering upon in Rome's story invite to consider the moral conditions of the ancient capital, and the change actually effected in her social life by the progress of Christianity. The City's externals may be well enough pictured to ourselves through aid of the *Notitiae*, which enumerate all her buildings, establishments, haunts of pleasure and vice: 46,602 of the houses let in floors, called *insulae*, 780 palaces (*domus*), 17 piazzas, 234 mills and bakeries, 16 Thermae, 856 other public baths, called *balnei*, 1352 fountains, 17 basilicas (for civil and juridic affairs), 29 libraries, 3 theatres, 8 circuses, 6 arenas for gladiatorial combats, 5 naumachiae; and in the artistic range, 23 equestrian, 80 gilded bronze, 84 ivory statues of gods and emperors, besides the marble multitude in theatres, thermae, or on triumphal arches. The population, less positively ascertainable, may be estimated at about a million—whether, or not, including the 3000 public musicians and 3000 female dancers, who, we are told, were exempted from the sentence of expulsion decreed by the Senate against all other supernumerary inmates during stress of famine! The yet unreduced wealth of the great patrician families, up to this period, was enormous, in the first class attaining an average computed at 5 1/2 million francs per annum; in the second class, from one third to one fourth as much. And when these millionaire senators made progress to visit their several villas,



they were accompanied by some fifty slaves and eunuchs of all ages, besides a retinue of cooks, parasites, buffoons. Clad in silk and purple, with figures of plants and animals embroidered on their long tunics, their delight was to drive in charriots glittering with ornaments, or listen at the sumptuous banquet to hydraulic organs, and strains from flutes or lyres of enormous size, now in fashionable demand; literature the while being almost forgotten or unknown, save a few scurrilous books alone in favour among these aristocratic circles. As to the lower classes, indolence and vice were now fostered by the still indiscriminate charities substituted, under the Christian Emperors, for the monthly largesses of ancient time: a multitude who, for the most part, probably, had no roof to live under, or other home than wretched cellars and hovels, but who spent the great part of the day in the circus and amphitheatre, used to be fed by a daily distribution of loaves (3 lbs to each applicant), obtained by ticket at bakeries, either gratis or at the lowest possible price; and during five months in the year by a regular allowance of bacon; besides wine, procurable, if paid for at all, at the slightest cost (Ammianus, lib. XIV, c. 6; Gibbon, c. XXXI). Public entertainments had sunk into the most frivolous and licentious character: obscene farce, dancing, pageantry. The tragic and comic Muse being almost silent, the games of the Circus filled the supreme place in popular favour; and the impatient crowd would rush from dawn of day, many would pass the whole night in the adjacent porticoes, for the object of securing places in the Circus Maximus. The *Historiae Miscellae* give one horrific instance of the corruption and crime now prevailing at Rome. In the time of Theodosius men and women used to be inveigled into houses of ill fame, and there made to fall through trap-doors into subterraneans, where they were kept for life, the one sex forced to work for the public bakeries, the other consigned to infamy—which mystery of iniquity was at last revealed by a gallant soldier, who had been caught in the infernal toils, but succeeded in fighting his way out at the point of his sword. As was natu-

ral, amid such circumstances, the prevailing habits among this people were still essentially Pagan ; nor have we reason to believe that, as to other excesses besides those of the banquet and toilet, amusement and squandering, the general morals of these citizens under the reign of Honorius were less licentious than in the time of the ancient Caesars. The divining art was in full practice, as also the habit of swearing by the gods, and observing the Thursday as sacred to Jupiter. Even in attendance at Christian worship, Pagan hymns used to be sung, and dances kept up in the atrium, or outer court, during sacramental rites; talk and laughter sometimes interrupted the office of the Clergy, who, if their chant were slow or unpleasing, might be desired to quicken or alter their tones, to please the audience. Not without cause therefore did St. Augustine lament, « that sometimes he who came to the church a Christian, returned thence a Pagan ! »

Amidst such moral elements we cannot be surprised at what we read of the effect produced by shocks of universal panic and public calamity. Radagasius, a leader (as supposed) of the Huns, who had fought under Alaric, invaded Italy, A. D. 405, with an immense army of barbarians, which was marching towards Rome when apposed in its swift career, surrounded, and almost totally exterminated on the heights of Fiesole by the forces led by Stilicho. Whilst the terror of the first intelligence prevailed, the general outcry in Rome was against the Christian Religion, as cause of the present calamities: « See how all things fall into ruin in the time of the Christians »—« as St. Augustine quotes the now popular phrase; and Orosius mentions the concourse of discontented Pagans to this centre, the general cry that the capital had been left to destruction because the ancient gods were no longer worshipped; « the name of Christ was loaded with opprobrium as the pernicious cause of present ill » (1).

(1) *Fit omnium Paganorum in urbe concursus: hostem cum utique virium copia, tum maxime potentem praesidio deorum, urbem autem ideo destitutam et mature perituram, quia deos et sacra*

Alaric, elected king of the Visigoths, 398, had been received into favour by Theodosius, who appointed him « *magister militum* » in the Roman Army; and by the feeble Arcadius he was allowed to occupy the Greek provinces his forces had already over-run and laid waste; with still more unwise concession, left master also of the four chief arsenals within the Illyrian Prefecture, an advantage he turned to account by ordering the labours of four years in the exclusive object of supplying weapons to his troops. In pride of conscious strength he offered to guarantee the Italian confines from all danger, on condition of a tribute of 400 lbs in gold, promised to him by the Senate with but one dissentient voice, whose utterer had, for his temerity, to seek refuge in a church from the rage excited against him. Either the idea of a mission, a vengeance imposed from on high as his special task, possessed the mind of Alaric; or he had at least the penetration to perceive that some dim presentiment of coming ill now so prevailed in the Western Empire as to offer moral support to his ambitious projects. He had heard, and endeavoured to circulate, an Oracle declaring him to be the destined agent for the destruction of Rome and her dominion. In 408 he first marched against the ancient capital, obeying, as he professed, a mysterious voice that nightly urged him: « Go, Alaric, and devastate Rome » (1). The City, long regularly beleaguered, was exposed to all the extremities of humiliation, the horrors of famine and pestilence. To the first proposals of capitulation the invader replied that, in return for all the treasure she possessed, he would grant life to her inhabitants.

*perdiderit. Fervent tota urbe blasphemiae, vulgo nomen Christi tanquam lues aliqua praesentium temporum probris ingravatur!* Orosius. lib. VII, cap. 37.

(1) When a holy hermit tried to dissuade him from the attack, he is said to have replied: Not willingly do I march against Rome; but there is that within me which daily urges and agitates me, a voice that says, « Go, and destroy the City Rome! »

At last condescending to terms, he allowed Rome to ransom herself by a tribute strangely exacted—5000 lbs of gold, 30,000 of silver, 30,000 of pepper; 4000 vestments of silk, and 3000 furs, or fine cloth-pieces, dyed scarlet.

To provide the amount in the precious metals it was necessary to melt down many statues of gods, or their ornaments, still left in the now-closed temples; among others, that of the deified « Valour »; and this last sacrilege against Paganism was felt by its adherents with mournful indignation. An attempted revival of that fallen worship was one of the memorable incidents during this first siege. Etruscan Augurs, perhaps estimating aright the temper of the populace, made offer to the Senate to save Rome by diverting heaven's lightnings against her foes, as they boasted of having done with magical success at Narni, when that town was besieged. The Haruspices came next to counsel the offering of solemn sacrifice to Jupiter on the Capitol as the surest means to obtain divine aid; but the Senate, however mentally biased, did not deem it wise to sanction either proceeding, — « the majority (says Gibbon) refused to join in an act which appeared almost equivalent to the public restoration of Paganism » (c. xxxi). It does not, however, appear certain that such sacrifices were in consequence prevented from taking place. Pope Innocent I, whose influence seems for the time to have failed, left on an embassy to Honorius immediately after the siege, for the ratifying of the terms of surrender.

In the following year Alaric returned, irritated by the false and evasive policy of Honorius. Again was Rome beleaguered till the degrading condition had been imposed and accepted, that another emperor, Priscus Attalus, formerly prefect, should be raised up in rivalry to the son of Theodosius! During his phantom-rule that creature of the Gothic king promised much to the Senate, and ingratiated the idol-worshippers by authorizing their assemblies. Encamped before Ravenna, he received proposals from the humiliated Honorius to divide in concord the western Empire between



them ; but replied that if that Prince would instantly resign the purple , his utmost reward should be a peaceful exile in some remote island ! Before a year had passed , Attalus was cast down by the power that had raised him , and given up to the vengeance of the court at Ravenna. Alaric seems never to have renounced his dire resolves against the doomed City. In the Summer of 410 he returned , more implacable than before ; and after a brief siege , the queenly metropolis , delivered up through treason , was for the first time captured , becoming the prey of barbarian invaders : her walls were entered at midnight , and the blast of the Gothic trumpet announced to her inhabitants that the foe had obtained admission by the Salarian gate. Alaric prohibited incendiarism , and is said to have given orders to spare life , to respect at least the two great basilicas of the Apostles. But for six days and nights every species of rapine and outrage continued : citizens of all classes were slain in the streets ; the most exquisite works of art were torn from shrine or palace , to be carried away or wantonly destroyed ; statues melted for the sake of their precious material , and many a precious vase shivered by the battle-axe ; gold , jewels , ivory tables , silver tripods , silk vestments , embroidered hangings were laden in cars to be driven after the retreating army. But a strange contrast , a spectacle yet unexampled amidst like scenes of horror , was presented amidst the very climax of the barbarian tempest. The house of a religious female had been entered by a soldier who demanded gold ; she at once showed him treasures of immense price that had been confided to her care—no other than the sacred vessels of St. Peter's , — declaring to the amazed Goth that she did not attempt to withhold what she could not defend , but warned him that those objects were sacred to the great Apostle , and that if he took them , the sacrilege would rest on his conscience. The soldier reported to his chief ; and by Alaric's order those sacred treasures were carried back to the basilica by the troops themselves , a pious multitude following with chant of hymns ,

all to take refuge in the same sanctuary, which, conformably with that leader's commands, remained inviolate. What a contrast to the scenes enacted within that church by the soldiers of the Catholic Emperor in 1527 !

No more striking presentment than that procession to Saint Peter's could be imagined for indicating the triumph of new principles over the ruin of the rejected Past, alike symbolized in the wreck and havock of the desolated City around. The scene of the invasion by the Gothic troops in the yet inviolate mausolea of Augustus and Hadrian, — the bursting of fierce soldiers into those silent halls of death, to search for secret treasure by the torchlight that gleamed on their arms, whilst the sepulchral vaults echoed to their savage cries, — this forms another episode in the tragic story most impressive to the imagination, and fraught with meanings beyond utterance. The Apocalyptic visions now attained historic fulfilment.

An archeologic authority states that « in scarcely one instance can outrageous destruction of works of art be reproached, on historic proofs, against the Goths » (Müller, *Arch. der Kunst*); and a contemporary writer represents them as urged by Greek monks to demolish the temple of Eleusis, where the Mysteries of Ceres had been kept up till thus violently brought to a close. But it is difficult to reconcile such milder aspects with accounts of their deeds at Rome.

This tempest of calamity proved perhaps more effectual for the extirpation of lingering Paganism at Rome than all the edicts of Christian emperors previous ; it shook the ascendancy, and broke the charm of that system in the imagination. And how much life-blood still flowed in the veins of the imperial City is evident from the circumstance that, within a few years subsequently, it was found requisite to double the quantity of grain imported for the distribution of the customary largess. On one occasion, about the same period, the Prefect had to inform the Senate of the arrival of 14,000 strangers in one day ; and it may be inferred that, after

about seven years, all the beauty of Rome, in her palaces and public buildings, had risen anew without any trace of the Gothic siege (Ricci, *Storia dell'Architettura*).

In 440 was elected to the chair of St. Peter one of its worthiest occupants, Leo I, justly revered as a Saint and honoured as « the Great », who has been styled the Cicero of the Catholic pulpit, the Homer of Theology, the Aristotle of Faith. The invasion of Attila gave rise to an event through which, by act of this Pontiff, was added an additional ray of purest lustre to the resplendent aureole of the Papacy. That terrible warrior, chief of a fierce and hideous Asiatic tribe in the lowest stage of barbarism, marched at the head of perhaps 700,000 soldiers, spreading ruin and desolation during a quarter of a century; and crossed the Julian Alps in 452 after his career of triumph had received the first check through the brilliant victory at Chalons (451) won by the last great general of Rome, Aetius, together with the now-allied Visigoths. A hermit had first given to Attila the epithet « Scourge of God », — which he thenceforth assumed in savage vanity, after first affecting the title « Hammer of the world » (1). Theodosius II, (now on the Byzantine throne) adopted the miserable policy of purchasing peace from him by an annual tribute of 700 lbs in gold; and the Roman Senate, in the panic of the moment, decided to offer presents, tribute, any price to avert the threatened onset. At this crisis the insignificant Emperor, Valentinian III, was induced by Aetius to quit Ravenna, and make Rome once more the court-residence. Attila, after the destruction of Aquileia, the capture of other cities in northern Italy, and the utter devastation of their territories, left Milan to march upon Rome; and had encamped below Mantua, near the confluence of the Po and

(1) The hideous ape-like aspect and savage manners of the Huns had made the impression at last embodied in the grim legend of their descent from the union of Demons with witches in northern Asia.

Mincio, when he was met by the Pontiff and two<sup>1</sup> Senators charged with the embassy so important. Here took place that momentous interview, so idealized by tradition and Art, which, whatever its actual tenor, certainly resulted in a total change of the invader's plans, and in the deliverance of Rome from terrific disaster. We are told that St. Leo assumed his pontific vestments for the occasion; and the majesty of his person, his tall figure and flowing white beard, may have contributed to awe a barbarian mind. His contemporary, St. Prosper of Aquitaine, who assisted this Pontiff as secretary or collaborer in some of his writings, leaves the details under mystery, giving no other report than that: « He relied upon the aid of God, which he knew would never fail to the efforts of the pious; and the result was not other than faith had anticipated » (*Chronic. ad ann. 452*). The author of the *Historiae Miscellae* states that, when Attila was asked what had led him to such signal concession on the demand of the Roman Bishop, he replied that he had beheld, standing beside that priest, another personage of awful aspect with a drawn sword, threatening vengeance should he presume to resist. Art treats the vision as the manifest interposition of St. Peter, or of the two chief Apostles. But this supernaturalism is not confirmed by the earlier historians, or by Anastasius, who mentions the embassy and its result without notice of the vision—offspring, no doubt, of later excited imagination. One appeal which Leo had been authorized to employ, of a nature well suited to act on the chieftain's impetuous will, was the offer of annual tribute in the name of the Emperor (1).

(1) It is remarkable that in the *Legenda Aurea* the account of the vision seen by Attila is so altered that, instead of an Apostle, it is a *soldier* who appears at the Pope's side — « a most mighty warrior with drawn sword ». When the body of Leo I was exposed to view, during the works at St. Peter's, 4580, it was found vested in a chasuble of dark purple, a pallium studded with red crosses where folding over the shoulders, and a silk mitre embroidered with



Three years subsequently the feeble and dissolute Valentinian was murdered by a patrician, Petronius Maximus, in revenge for brutal wrong to a virtuous wife—the Emperor meeting thus a fate well deserved, not long after he had slain with his own hand, and with the sword never drawn in his country's cause, the valiant and energetic Aetius, his only efficient general — another victim to imperial ingratitude, as had been the more illustrious Stilicho.

Maximus met with no obstacle in ascending the vacant throne; and after the death of his injured wife, induced the widow of Valentinian, Eudoxia, to unite herself to him, after which nuptials he did not scruple to boast to her that he had caused her first husband's death — unsuspected, it seems, on her part, for it was by other hands that the Emperor had been actually slain on the Campus Martius. In order to deliver herself from a union now become hateful, Eudoxia resolved on the guilty expedient of inviting the Vandal chief, Genseric, to invade Italy from northern Africa, now subjected to his sway. Genseric landed with a large army at Ostia, and reached the gates of Rome within four months after the usurper had seized that power in which he found so little happiness that he used to exclaim: « O fortunate Damocles, whose reign begun and ended in the same banquet! » Now left alone and helpless, Maximus attempted escape, but was stoned in the streets by the populace, who threw his body into the Tiber — his fate in this resembling that of Heliogabalus. The Vandals entered the City on the 12th June, 455; and to the same holy pontiff who had saved her from Attila was Rome now indebted for whatever mercy gleamed amidst the darkness of horror and crime ensuing. She was abandoned during fourteen days and nights to indiscriminate massacre

gold—a verified instance of the mitre's appearance among episcopal ornaments, though here, indeed, not earlier than the X. century, when that body was re-entombed.

and pillage; the three principal basilicas alone, with the lives of those who could reach their sanctuaries, being spared, thanks to the influence of St. Leo. This proved the most terrible chastisement yet sent to humble her « that was almighty named ». Whatever had been spared by Goths of her treasures and monuments, artistic objects, sacred vessels, everything of intrinsic value, now become the prey of Vandals. The consecrated vessels brought by Titus from Jerusalem (seen in the beautiful sculptures on that Emperor's triumphal arch); the gilt bronze that roofed the splendid temple of Jupiter on the Capitol; the colossal bronze statue of Nero, afterwards transformed into an Apollo; the furniture and ornaments of the imperial palace — all now disappeared, broken up for the sake of the material, or swept into the common heap of booty. The present condition of the vaguely definable but imposing ruins (in great part recently brought to light) on the Palatine Hill, still bears witness to the desolating onset of those invaders, in remembrance of whose outrages against monuments and art, the term « Vandalism » has become a byword among nations. Eudoxia, cause of all this ruin, was robbed of the jewels on her person, when on her way to meet the savage deliverer she had hoped for; with her two daughters she was led away captive, undistinguished among the throng, said to have numbered about 60,000, who were embarked for Carthage together with incalculable spoils, that probably comprised almost the entire moveable wealth of Rome.

This century had not elapsed before the doomed City was again besieged by Ricimir, a chief of the Suevi race, who elevated and cast down emperor after emperor, bestowing on the creatures of his arbitrary will that sceptre once the most potent on earth. In its dying agony of twenty years the western Empire was subject to nine successive rulers, alike powerless to avert the catastrophe. Avitus, deposed by Ricimir, 456, was forced to accept the bishopric of Piacenza.

— for a novel source of corruption now begun to profane the sacred sphere in the compulsory acceptance of orders, or retirement into the cloister. Majorianus, the next raised up, was a brave and enlightened man, worthy of better fate, who was murdered in his camp by his own troops. Some of the laws he had little time to enact display a reforming spirit: as the prohibition of religious vows by females under the age of forty; the severe enactment against the offence (then perhaps common) of demolishing public buildings, to be punished by scourging and amputation of hands, if the culprit were an inferior magistrate. After the death of Severus (465) Ricimir held the government in his own hands, with an absolute dictatorship, for two years. Anthemius, a Greek, whom he raised up in accord with the Byzantine emperor, he desired to depose after five years, in order to give the throne to Olibrius. Rome was again besieged (for the fifth time between 408 and 472); taken after a resistance of three months, and given up to pillage without mercy, except in those quarters where Ricimir's countrymen were lodged. Anthemius was put to death; and Olibrius survived to reign only three months. Ricimir being soon afterwards cut off also by natural death, he was succeeded in the same barbarian dictatorship by his nephew Gundebaud, an exiled Burgundian King, from whom the anomalous power was seized by a former soldier of Attila, Orestes. By him the Emperor Nepos was deposed (474) in order to proclaim his own son, Romulus Augustus—a singular coincidence of names, turned by popular derision into « Momillus Augustulus ». But the authority of Orestes fell before the dominant fortunes of a new ruler, elected king by different tribes of auxiliars, the Rugian, or Herulian, Odoacer, who, almost without resistance, became master of Italy; seized the person of Orestes, and put him to death, at Pavia; after this, marched upon Rome, entered without opposition, and deposed the boy-emperor (476), who was, however, treated mercifully, even generously, allowed

to spend the rest of his days, on a liberal pension, at a delicious villa near Naples (1). On Odoacer the servile Senate now conferred the rank of Patrician; and, guided by his will, addressed a letter to the Greek emperor, Zeno, representing the inutility of a farther succession in the West, and their desire to place Rome under the immediate sway of Constantinople. The suppression of the imperial dignity being proclaimed, a new order of polity was founded under the nominal sovereignty of the Byzantine Caesar and the immediate dictatorship of Orestes. This lasted but few years, being violently overthrown by the shock of invasion when the the Ostrogoths descended upon Italy (489), led by Theodoric, their king or duke, who had been educated, as a hostage, at the Greek court. From that centre of prerogatives this new favourite of Fortune received a formal concession of Italy — act characteristic of the feeble and ignoble government now seated at Constantinople. Odoacer was totally defeated in two battles by the Ostrogoths; and being excluded from Rome, whose gates were shut on his approach, retreated to Ravenna, his last strong-hold, where he sustained a gallant resistance against the besieging invaders for three years. After

(1) The home assigned to the ex-emperor was the palace built by Marius on the cape of Misenum, which by purchase became that of Lucullus, and had been stained by the crimes of many earlier emperors, here, for intervals, resident. In 496 it was converted into a monastery, and made sacred by the relics of St. Severinus; but in 846 very differently appropriated by Sicilian Moslems, who fortified it with great strength, profiting by its fine situation. To dislodge such occupants for ever the Neapolitans decided on a demolition; and in 902 laboured for five days in this object; at last discovering in the forgotten shrine those sacred relics, at sight of which all present burst into tears. Next day the remains of the saint were brought with pomp into Naples, met by all the Clergy and Magistrates with chant of psalms both Greek and Latin; and S. Severino, the extant church, finally received that deposit



capitulation had become a necessity, Theodoric entered as a conqueror (493), to form a new Italian kingdom whose metropolis was that city on the Adriatic. Odoacer, tempted by treacherous promises to remain, was, a few days afterwards, assassinated at a banquet by the hand of the king who had invited his victim for this murderous violation of hospitality — the last historic tragedy of a fatally-eventful epoch.

There is a spot within the walls, though far from the populous quarters, of Rome, where a forlorn picturesqueness, an almost wild solitude harmonize with, and dispose us to dwell upon, the thoughts suggested by great world-catastrophes, — here especially by those of her own marvellous story. I allude to that Salarian Gate on whose double archway we still see, in broken travertine stonework, the traces of that fatal night (24th August 410), when the Goths entered through this towered structure in the then recently-built walls of Honorius.

A constant tradition, said to be derived from the Sibylline books, had assumed that the term of Rome's dominion would coincide with her twelfth century; and that date had arrived when the young Augustulus was deposed in the year 429 since the historically-known origin of the City. That dominion had not been founded in justice; and even the adoption of Christianity had done little towards the cure of its organic defects; little to elevate or humanize the character of Rome's despotic rulers (with a few honoured exceptions), still less for the general morality of her populace. To say that the moral purpose of her whole history was the education of Mankind for a new and higher civilization, is but to announce in other terms that her great world-task was to pre-

(Amari, *Musulmani in Sicilia*). In the magnificent scene where historic and tragic memories haunt almost every distinguishable spot in view from the Cape of Miseno, the fate of the young Augustus, who is said to have been singularly beautiful, may blend with other remembrances to increase the spells of that fascinating landscape immortalized in the improvisation of *Corinne*.

pare for the final ascendancy of true Religion. Included among the many advantages won through her fall, was the change in the order of ideas as to the origin of power, and rights of nations; the rise of theories accordant with Christian teaching in regard to political interests, and which may be said to culminate in what is become especially the conviction of the present day—that government, to be essentially legitimate, must be the expression of the national mind and will, must rest on intellectual assent and popular attachment. We might write an epitaph over fallen Rome in the words of Byron :

She should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

The Christian and Pagan mind were perhaps alike profoundly agitated by the fate of Empire; and St. Augustine tells us (*Civ. Dei* lib. I, cap. 33) of the general sorrow that thrilled the whole world for that great misfortune. When intelligence of the capture and sackage by Alaric reached a large assembly of prelates then in council at Carthage, it was received with religious awe rather than grief, those venerable men recognizing a Divine visitation in the chastisement of the second Babylon—the scarlet-robed sorceress of the Apocalypse. And it is probable that the Christian community soon felt, what theologians afterwards agreed in interpreting, a fulfilment in the dread catastrophe so wondrously correspondent to the details of prophetic utterance, as to present irrefragable proof of inspired authority in the Revelations of « the rapt Seer of Patmos », whilst at the same time reflecting a light of solemn awfulness on the historic reality. The most eloquent comment and religious interpretation of these events was soon in part made public in a work surpassing in scope and power almost all hitherto produced in Christian literature, St. Augustine's « City of God » — « the funeral oration of the Roman Empire pronounced from a cloister », as Villemain says. Here is completely refuted the low and materialistic idea, which runs through many Christian writings of earlier

date, that success was the test of truth, that victory was certain to be on the same side with orthodox belief, by maintaining which, indeed, the Christians had supplied weapons for the hands of the Pagans now to wield appropriately against them. The saintly bishop of Hippo brought into clear light the distinction between the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdoms of earthly power, the absolute independence of the Church in respect to all organisations of secular polity. He argues that Rome had been allowed a universal dominion only because the Religion of Christ was to become universal; that, as the old Law had been a preparation for the new, so did all things in the ancient world converge towards that central power, and at the same time towards the Advent of Christ, subsequently to which event all had combined to bring about the final and complete triumph of the Faith in Him. The *Civitas Dei* so abounds with notices relevant to the character of the period, that its perusal is indispensable for the full understanding of the historic picture; and this celebrated work may be said to have laid the foundation for a genuine philosophy of History from the Christian point of view.

In the monumental range also the sum of results from the fall of Empire must be pronounced rather good than evil. Henceforth arises the new life of an art gradually emancipating itself from the Past, deriving ideas and types from Christian sources instead of classic reminiscences; and though for ages yielding but an inferior product, yet now reaching a phase necessarily to be passed through before the highest attainment in accordance with the demands of a spiritual faith. In Mosaic especially, the form that soon becomes most conspicuous for sacred representation, do these new tendencies begin, even during the V century, to appear, manifest in the works that decorate ancient basilicas both at Rome and Ravenna. Great is the difference between the leading figures of sacred groups on apse or chancel-arch in those churches (as at St. Paul's and S. Maria Maggiore), and in the reliefs on

sarcophagi, or in the dimly-traced paintings of Catacombs; though the classic influence continues, indeed, apparent in art-produce till a much later period than that here considered (4).

(4) Orosius, *Historia*, lib. VII; St. Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, lib. I, cap. 4, 7, 40, 46, 47, 34, lib. II, 47, lib. V, 23; *Hist. Miscel.*, in Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Script.* Tom. I, p. II; St. Jerome, *ep. XI ad Principiam*; Sozomen, IX, X; Thierry, *Tableau de l'Empire Rom.*, *Histoire d'Attila*; Ranieri, *Storia d'Italia dal V al IX secolo*; Cantù, *Storia universale*, *epoca VII*; Bollandists, *vita S. Leonis*; Miley, *History of the Papal States*. In the wild funeral dirge sung by his soldiers over the bier of Attila (v. Thierry) is the following allusion to the Roman episode: "appeased by prayers, he accepted an annual tribute".

In Graevius, *Thesaurus Antiq. Rom.*, Tom. III, is a report on the buildings and regions of Rome in the V century, with some different and additional details besides those in the *Notitiae*: 424 streets; 46,662 private houses; 4780 palaces; 36 marble arches; 268 magazines of victuals (besides the bakeries); 424 temples, and 44 sacred groves.



## VI.

### **The Church in the Fifth Century.**

AT the great crisis of the Western Empire the Church proved nobly equal to the demands of the disastrous time : and the beneficence of saintly Prelates —

— Servants of God , who not a thought would share  
With the vain world—

shone forth like gleams of pure sunlight amidst the tempest-clouds of this dark horizon. More than sufficient does History preserve to show us , throughout this period's ordeal , what the undying life of Christian charity, the immortal virtues informing an Institution divine in origin and principles.

Pope Innocent unfortunately lost the occasion of exercising the highest attributes of his apostolic ministry during the siege and sack by the Goths (410) , being then absent , engaged in negotiations , at Ravenna. But other great prelates , like St. Leo , succeeded in saving their cities and flocks from the exterminating invasion of Attila : thus was Ravenna delivered through the interposition of her bishop , St. John Angeloptes ; and Troyes through means of St. Lupus. At Carthage, on the arrival of the countless captives led from Rome by the Vandals , the bishop Deogratias sold all the precious vessels of the altars to redeem from bondage as many as those riches sufficed for ; converted two churches into hospitals for the suffering ; at his own cost supplied food and medi-

cines, and waited upon those patients day and night, till his old age sunk under the exertion. For like charitable purposes did St. Paulinus part with all the treasures of the splendid basilica at Nola which his verse describes. It is narrated of that prelate by St. Gregory (Dialogues, lib. III) that he actually sold himself into slavery to redeem the son of a poor widow, and spent same years in Africa, serving the son of the Vandal king in capacity of gardener, till at last recognised, and sent back with all the other captives from his diocese emancipated at his request—a beautiful legend that cannot be considered historic (for the writings of Paulinus bear no evidence to such fact, nor is there proof that he was ever absent from Nola at this crisis), but which may still be admitted as a representation of the reality in the exhaustless charities and heroic zeal on the part of the episcopal body in general, and of the profound gratitude with which their services were remembered in the public mind.

Among other important consequences of the overthrow of Empire was the freedom thereby secured to future developments in the life of a hierarchic system which could scarcely have become what it proved to be at the zenith of its wondrous ascendancy, had Emperors continued to reside beside Pontiffs on the seven hills, as they did, without any dangerous antagonism, from the year 452 to 476. The temporal sovereignty that still agitates so many minds and presents grave questions to European diplomatists, is one of the results to this day felt from the abolition of that power beneath which St. Peter's successors were subject.

St. Boniface I (418) had to struggle against an Antipope, Eulalius, who through violence became master of the Lateran till forced to resign by imperial edict; both candidates being cited to Ravenna, and both apparently satisfied to submit to the arbitration of Honorius in this contest. St. Celestine (428) witnessed the rise of the Nestorian sect, adding a twenty-second to the number of heresies that now disturbed the Church's peace, and against whose followers no fewer

than sixty-six enactments are included in the Theodosian code, besides the laws against apostates, magicians, and Jews. Celestine condemned the Nestorian doctrines from their origin; and suggested to the Greek Emperor the expediency of convoking a general Council, which in the sequel (431) met at Ephesus to define the questions at issue, and to pass the memorable decree declaring the Blessed Virgin in strict orthodox sense « Mother of God » — θεοτοκος. This Pontiff proved a most zealous opponent of heresies; deprived the Novatians of the churches they had obtained at Rome, and caused the Pelagians to be driven out of Italy—an instance of control over the civil power, now secured to the Roman Bishopric, similar to that in the case of St. Leo, who, having discovered some Manichaeans in concealment at Rome, denounced them to the magistrates, thus attaining the object of their expulsion. The burning of heretical books (precursory to the modern *Index*) now became a frequent expedient of Catholic authorities. Thus were the writings of Arius consumed by imperial command after the Nicene Council; those of Eunomius by order of Arcadius; those of Nestorius and Eutyches severally after the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. And thus did St. Leo burn, with his own hand (it seems), certain Manichaean books—imitated in this act by Gelasius, whose figure, with those of three other sainted Popes, was introduced among the frescoes of the splendid Borghese chapel at S. Maria Maggiore, commemorative of the circumstance that it was in the atrium of that church he rendered such service to the cause of orthodoxy.

From this century acts of incipient or modified persecution begin to appear with increasing frequency and portentous import in ecclesiastical annals. The principle once admitted that men ought to be punished, or subjected to any sort of disabilities, on account of dogmatic error, the transition is neither unnatural nor altogether illogical from the code of Theodosius to the *Auto da fe* of Philip II!

Sixtus III (432) is principally known for his liberal donations to churches, and for the rebuilding, with superior scale and splendour, of the Liberian basilica, intended as a monumental tribute to the Blessed Virgin, whose divine honours had just been so emphatically sanctioned. And it is probable that he also rebuilt the extramural S. Lorenzo, raising that basilica from the ruin in which it had been left after its pillage by the Goths. Sixtus being accused by an ex-consul of a scandalous outrage, the Emperor ordered his cause to be judged by a synod; he submitted, and fifty-six bishops, after investigation, declared him innocent; the calumniator was cut off from communion till he should be reduced to seek that privilege on his deathbed, and by imperial decree all his property was confiscated to the Church—an episode in which, as in that of the contest between Boniface and Eulalius, it is manifest that even orthodox emperors still assumed a headship over the Church, save in regard to purely doctrinal interests. St. Leo was distinguished not only for his high services in a patriotic cause, but for his munificent public works, his restoration of the two great basilicas, the Ostian and Vatican, beside the latter of which he founded a monastery; likewise for his writings, he being the first Pope to bequeath a body of literature, consisting of 96 sermons and 141 Letters, entitled by their merits to enduring reputation, and justly praised for style. After the Vandal sackage he exerted himself to repair the loss suffered by the several churches, and had melted down six large silver vessels, gifts from Constantine to basilicas, each 100 lbs in weight, for supply of the indispensable altar-plate in different parishes. Pope Hilary (461) — whose life, when he had been sent as legate by his predecessor to another Council held at Ephesus, 449, was exposed to actual danger through the furious contests of the Oriental monks — proved a worthy successor to Saint Leo, and had the signal merit of founding the first Papal Library (two libraries, as Ciaconius states) at the Lateran.



He boldly resisted the Emperor Anthemius when the surprisingly liberal measure had been resolved upon of granting toleration to all religious sects in Rome ; and the Pontiff carried his point in inducing the abandonment of a policy quite in advance of the age, sure to have been reprobated by all prejudices then dominant. St. Simplicius (468) showed how far the Papacy could now exercise magisterial control by suppressing, on the Sundays, all spectacles in the theatre and circus, litigations in the courts, combats of wild beasts ec. — No doubt public entertainments, at this period, deserved all censure ; but the Popes of modern time, in this respect liberal, have allowed the theatre to become, as it now is at Rome, more especially the favourite amusement of all classes on the Sunday than on any other nights in the week — wisely judging that to deprive the populace of innocent pleasure whilst ordinary occupation must be suspended, is not the way to sanctify, but rather to desecrate by vice the day set apart as sacred. Another well-counselled act of Simplicius was to revive the ancient economic practice, dividing ecclesiastical revenues in the several dioceses into four equal parts—for the Bishop, for the sacred edifice, for the Clergy, and for the poor. When this Pope desired to eject an intruder, uncanonically elected, from the see of Alexandria, he did not assume authority to himself with immediate interference in a cause so delicate, but wrote to the Emperor Zeno, requesting him to take legal steps for the deposition. St. Felix II (483) was elected in presence of a Prefect appointed to represent Odoacer, on a claim, now advanced by a barbarian conqueror, to interpose in the great transactions of the Church. He resisted the attempts of the Greek Emperor to dictate in dogmatic questions by a *Henoticon* (as the novel species of rescript was entitled) ; but was the first Pope to adopt the paternal style towards that sovereign, addressing him as « my son » — a formula not without significance. St. Gelasius (492) left many traces of his influence and zeal in the purely ecclesiastic sphere ; and to this pontificate re-

fers an extant list of the clerical body and *tituli* (urban churches) to which its members were attached: 24 Cardinal Archpriests, 27 Cardinal Priests, 40 minor Presbyters, and 7 Cardinal Deacons — not that the Cardinalate as yet implies anything like the attributes or splendours now pertaining to it. Within this period also occurs the memorable event, fraught with great and beneficial consequences, of the founding of the celebrated monastic order by St. Benedict, who, in 494, then a youth of only fourteen, retired to a cavern among the mountains of Subiaco to dedicate himself to eremite solitude and austerities, perhaps little imagining how great, influential, and intellectually-dominant was to prove the institution taking its rise from a source so piously humble, ascetic, and obscure. A Council held at Rome by Gelasius put forth one of the first assertions of primacy in that See, whilst allowing the second place in hierarchic rank to Alexandria, the third to Antioch, — had which announcement proceeded from any other centre, such testimony to accordance in a principle of ecclesiastical centralization would be indeed important; but though the Papal power was gaining at every step in spiritual and temporal advantages, the theory of theocratic monarchy was not yet adopted by the universal Church. The immediate successor to Innocent I, Zosimus (417), created the office of Vicariate to the Holy See in Gaul, invested almost with the powers of a Wolsey; but such a novel procedure « excited great controversies » (*Art de vérifier les Dates*); and when the same Pope admitted to communion a priest who had been degraded for crimes by his bishop in Mauritania, the African Episcopacy protested against this as a violation of the sacred canons; and Zosimus sent three emissaries to justify his act by adducing certain canons of a council at Sardis, confirmatory of others alleged to have been drawn up at Nicaea. A Council assembled at Carthage (418) pledged itself to admit the claim advanced by Rome if any Nicene canon could be authenticated in a sense favourable; a genuine transcript of the acts passed at Nicaea was procured from the

Greek Church, but no such canons as the legates had cited were found amongst them; and the Council justified its negative decision by sending this transcript to Boniface I, who had now succeeded to Zosimus. Again was the guilty priest received to communion by Pope Celestinus, to whom the African bishops addressed another remonstrance, in which document they begged him not to send any more legates to pass judgment in their provinces, lest he should seem to introduce into the Church the pomps and vanities peculiar to the potentates of the world; using also the remarkable terms: « Would it not be a temerity in any of us to assume that God would inspire a single individual with the spirit of justice, yet deny it to a large number of bishops assembled in Council? » — thus implying that Councils were the sole legitimate organs for declaring the mind of the Church (Dupin, *Auteurs Eccles.* vol. III).

After the brief pontificate of Anastasius II, that of Symmachus (498) opened with a sanguinary and obstinate contest excited by an Antipope (the fifth), raised up by the Patrician Festus, who acted in the Byzantine interest, aiming at the election of a Pope who would subscribe the *henoticon* of the dogmatizing Emperor Zeno. The usurper made himself master of the Lateran by armed force; and after the struggle had led to extremes of violence, outrage, and bloodshed, the question was referred to the arbitration of Theodoric: both claimants being cited to Ravenna, the strange spectacle was now presented of an appointment to the chief Catholic See in Europe determined by the judgment of an Arian King—a lost reprobate from the *modern*; a barbarian from the *ancient* point of view! His equitable decision confirmed at once the rights of Symmachus, and rejected the pretensions of Laurentius, the opponent; and the former was recognised legitimate Pope by a synod of 172 bishops, before whom he exculpated himself from criminal charges brought against him by foes, now trying another mode of attack. But not even these measures sufficed to put down the Antipope or restore peace to Rome;

and in the last year of this troubled century the City's streets were, day and night, a theatre of rapine and slaughter; the Senate siding with one or the other claimant; the Patrician heading the faction of Laurentius against the forces led by Faustus, an ex-consul, in the legitimate interest; priests being publicly put to death, nuns dragged from their retreats, to be stripped and scourged in the streets: crimes (it seems) which were perpetrated by the Antipope's faction alone; for thus did an Institution by nature peaceful, founded in humility and righteousness, become indirectly the means of bringing down an additional weight of calamities amidst all that Rome had to endure in the V century!

The highest task of Christian Rome, the extension of the faith among yet unconverted nations, was not suspended during this stormy period. Celestine sent a deacon, Paladius, into Scotland, and the celebrated Patricius (St. Patrick) into Ireland, for the sacred mission; also two other sainted pastors, Germanus and Lupus, into Britain with the immediate object of opposing the Pelagian heresy now prevalent in that land. From both Britain and Scotland had been finally withdrawn the Roman armies, and discontinued the long occupation under imperial government, in 420; — Rome, « awed by her own knell », having now to provide for nearer interests.

In the story of Ritual and Discipline this epoch presents much to claim attention: the Ordinations at the four Seasons, and several festivals were now introduced, especially the Rogations, first systematized, though not first practised, by Saint Mamert, bishop of Vienne. Zosimus introduced for all parish-churches, what is said to have been already observed in the chief Roman basilicas, the blessing of the « Paschal Candle » on Holy Saturday, thenceforth to be lit at solemnities till Ascension-day, as appropriate symbol of that Light of the World still remaining on earth after issuing triumphant from the grave. This usage is supposed at least as ancient as the IV century: the « Exultet », the chanted formula of blessing, ascribed both to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, being an example



of poetic prose, — its subject, the Fall and Redemption of Man—certainly among the most sublime ever inspired by religious feeling; and this symbolic observance adds to the completeness and mystic beauty of the Holy Week celebrations, contributing to their effect as a soul-moving embodiment of Christian devotion in form and utterance, invested with every highest quality of sacred aesthetics. The Pascal Candelabrum soon became a distinguished feature in the Romanesque basilica, where it is still seen above the marble screen-work, gracefully chiselled in many-tinted marbles, or inlaid with rich mosaic; and in earlier ages the waxen column bore the inscribed year of the Nativity, the Indiction, and number of the Epacts.

The Roman Church did not cease to exercise her largely-dealt charities, notwithstanding all she had suffered from barbarian rapine, in this period. Symmachus used to send regular supplies of money and clothing to 220 exiled bishops in Africa and Sardinia; and the same Pope founded asylums for the poor beside the Vatican, the Ostian, and the St. Laurence basilicas; also caused baths to be opened near the churches of SS. Martin and Sylvester and the extramural St. Pancrace — a practical proof that one salubrious habit of antique times had not yet departed from the social state of Christian Rome. But more remarkable is the wealth in donations bestowed by Popes on churches or oratories within this age; and when we remember how Rapine and Pillage had followed the steps of the Invader through the length and breadth of the land from the first appearance of the Goths till the exit of the last emperor, the example of exhaustless resources in the Papacy is indeed striking. The Church proved herself the heiress to whom was the promise of inheriting the earth; for all material riches seemed ready at the touch of her magic wand. We might conclude that the donations made by Hilary alone nearly sufficed to replace all that had been torn from Rome's sanctuaries by the soldiery of Alaric and Genseric; and their value is estimated by Ciaconius at 102,983

gold scudi ; some of their qualities and forms being noticeable—a golden arch resting on onyx columns and surmounted by a golden lamb, for the confessional of S. Croce ; and for the same church a gold cross set with gems, weight 20 lbs ; a golden lamp for ten lights, and three silver stags pouring water for the Lateran Baptistery ; a silver confessional for St. John's altar ; a silver tower (or tabernacle) with supporting, or otherwise ornamenting, dolphins (an emb'em of love, or of devout zeal—velocity in doing good), also a golden dove, for the reserved Eucharist. To the Lateran church Symmachus adjoined a chapel encrusted with silver of the weight of 300 lbs (4) ; and in the chancel of St. Peter's he placed silver statues of the Saviour and the twelve Apostles ; in front of which church now rose the quadriporticus (or *paradisus*), with a fountain in the centre ; and at each side, an *episcopium*, the first pontific residence mentioned as in this place, nucleus of the Vatican Palace.

Superstition and abuse serve to display the bias of the popular mind, as the feather shows the way of the wind. The Council of Carthage had to condemn the strange profanity of giving the Eucharist to the dead ! to prohibit bishops and priests from seeking a livelihood by any sordid trade ; also the ordaining of deacons, or consecrating of virgins as nuns, under the age of twenty-five. Different Popes exerted themselves to put down the hazardous irregularity of raising laymen at once to episcopal rank, without the antecedents of an ecclesiastical career ; and the above-named Council forbade any bishop to be consecrated without the consent of his metropolitan—not, therefore, recognising the principle of centralisation upheld by Rome. In the earlier years of this century appeared that phenomenon of morbid enthusiasm, the « Stylites », or Pillar Saints, the utmost departure (compatible with purity of intention) from the genuine norma of

(4) As to all these treasures, Ciaconius tells us that not one remained in Rome's churches in his time !

Christian life. Simeon, the first among these fakirs of Christianity, spent thirty-seven years on the summit of his column in Asia Minor, after for a time exhibiting strange austerities within a circle of stones on a mountain; in that more elevated solitude visited by admiring crowds of all classes and from all lands, even Persia, Ethiopia, and Scythia; revered and consulted in grave interests by Emperors, working miracles of healing, — as Theodoret, who had seen him, describes. Few, at most only six or seven, followed the grim example; but Evagrius (*Hist.* lib. VI, cap. 23), mentions one, who lived till near the end of the VI century, and surpassed his model by persisting for sixty-eight years in like stern isolation. A bishop of Hadrianople renounced his sacred duties to mount a column, where he spent sixty years, attended by choirs of monks and nuns, who, from below, joined their voices with his in psalmody day and night; but only one such example is on record in the hagiography of the West, a deacon of Longobardic birth, who spent some time on a pillar near Treves, till, in obedience to his more sensible bishop, he consented to quit it (Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* lib. VIII, 13). Simeon was called the « ambassador between earth and Heaven »; an altar was raised at his column's base; and in Rome he became the object of such veneration that not an artisan was without the little statuette of him commonly sold, and set up in the workshops, as the Madonna with the burning lamp is at the present day. What a change in popular ideas at the « Eternal City » since the bust of Marcus Aurelius, held in like favour, used to have its place in almost every house and shop, illumined as the Madonna is now, for several years after that philosophic Emperor's reign ! (1).

- (1) Inversion strange, that unto one who lives  
 For self, and struggles with himself alone,  
 The amplest share of heavenly favour gives !  
 That to a monk allots, in the esteem

Apparitions of St. Michael began, in this period also, to be reported and eagerly believed—not unnatural in the midst of frequently-recurring calamities, of the panic and constant anxiety attendant on the remembrance or apprehension of desolating warfare. The most celebrated of these visions appeared on Mount Garganus in Apulia; and a famous sanctuary rose in consequence, to become one of the chief centres for mediaeval pilgrimage (still devoutly frequented) on that height. And henceforth churches began to be dedicated, in different countries, to the Archangel, who is called by mystic writers: the Prince of Seraphim, the Leader of the Angelic Hosts, the Prefect of Paradise, the Guardian and Defender of Holy Church and of the Supreme Pontiff!

The definition of Ephesus respecting the Blessed Virgin was attended and followed by profound effects; in that city celebrated by illuminations, by exulting crowds who, after the votation of the Council, led the fathers to their homes in triumph. Soon was added to the Angelic salutation (already, it seems, in devotional use) the clause, « Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us », remarkable inasmuch as it converts a simple memorial of the Annunciation into a prayer addressing the highly-favoured One. In the range of Catacomb-art, the figure of Mary indeed appears from early date, but exclusively in historic relation to the Divine Child; as in two pictures of the Adoration of the Magi, where it may be referred to the second century, or, in one of these, to no later date than the beginning of the third (De Rossi, *Imagin. select. Virgin.*); and the earliest « Madonna and Child », apart from all historic grouping, in the S. Agnese Catacombs, to which Marchi ascribes highest antiquity, is regarded by Martigny as a first essay of that art-subject, raised into universal popularity through the decree of Ephesus, but later

Of God and man, place higher than to him

Who on the good of others builds his own! —

Which lines by Wordsworth, justly applicable to the Stylite, could not be with fairness cited against *all* the communities of cloistral life.



than the event of that Council. Mary often appears herself in act of prayer among these primitive representations ; never with any attribute or circumstance that implies the directing of devotional regards towards herself.

Even the earlier Christian poets are reserved in the honour they pay her : Prudentius refuses to ascribe to her absolute sinlessness :

Solut labe caret peccati conditor orbis ,  
Ingenitus genitusque Deus , Pater et Patre natus.  
Apotheosis , 894.

And Juvencus , undertaking to versify the entire Gospel History, omits her in some scenes where she ought to appear , as in the narrative of the Crucifixion. Dupin allows that the fathers of the first centuries « spoke of her with much respect, but always with much reserve : St. Clement affirmed that she had remained a virgin—but Tertullian , Origin and some others expressed themselves in different sense ; that « we find nothing in the first three centuries either for or against her assumption ; and there is a passage of St. Irenaeus unfavourable to the idea of her immaculate conception » (*Auteurs Eccles. : abrégé de la discipline*). At a date owned to be quite uncertain , but by some writers placed in the VI century , was introduced the festival of her Assumption, based on the poetic legend of her bodily ascent to Heaven within three days after her interment , the earliest authority for which is St. Gregory of Tours (*de Gloria Mart.* lib. I , 4) ; the next in date , St. John Damascene , whose account is given in the breviary for the 15th of August. But the most full and picturesquely suggestive compilation of all that relates to her death and glorified transit is in the *Legenda Aurea*, that repertory of the visions and memories cherished by the mediaeval mind ; where, however, the date of Mary's death is marked as uncertain ; and the narrative begins with the self-disqualifying avowal that it is taken from « a certain apocryphal book ascribed to St. John the Evangelist ». Thus much , however , we have from Greek

history : The princess Pulcheria having founded a church at Constantinople, the Emperor Arcadius inquired from Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem, as to the site of Mary's tomb ; learning that it stood near the garden of Gethsemane, he ordered it to be transferred *in toto* for the consecrating of that church, called « in Blacharnis » ; when that sepulchre was opened, previous to its removal, nothing was found inside except the winding sheet, and this also, together with the rest, reached Constantinople—Thus far Nicephorus ; though other writers state that the bier alone, by touch of which miracles were caused, had its final resting-place in the Byzantine temple ( « Life of the Blessed Virgin », by Mgr. Romualdo Gentilucci ). That last glorious scene in the story, the Assumption, became a prominent subject for art from the XIV century ; the only treatment of it ascribable beyond doubt to much earlier date ( that I know of ) being in the crypt-church of St. Clement at Rome. But in many instances Art was satisfied to adopt the more rational, whilst still mystic treatment of the theme, *not* as a resurrection in the body, but the transit of the Soul, in form of a new-born infant, received by the Saviour, whose benignant figure stands over the bier amidst the mourning Apostles. Sometimes both subjects, the transit of the Soul received into the Redeemer's arms, and the ascent of the reanimated body, appear in the same composition—as in the magnificent tabernacle by Orcagna at Or San Michele, where we see also another beautiful episode from the same legend, the Angel announcing her death to Mary, with a luminous palm, brought from Paradise to be borne before her bier (1). A devotion which has become so absorbing and

(1) Martin (*Hagioglypt.*) gives a drawing from a rude relief on a tomb in the crypt of Ste Madelaine at Saint-Maximin, representing Mary alone, with outspread arms in prayer, and the inscription above her head: *Maria Virgo minester de tempulo Gerosale* — a proof (seeing how primitive the artistic style) of the early belief in her dedication to a religious life at the temple. In the Christian Museum of the Vatican, the death of Mary and the reception of her

deep-rooted, must have place in the story both of Mind and Art. In Italy it has led to abuses that are, I believe, one source of the vague incredulity and apathetic feeling towards Religion now prevalent among the many who doubt, but care not to inquire. As such a worship rests on sentiment rather than truth, it does not naturally ally itself with any ideas of high responsibility, eternal law, or judgment to come; and hence its manifest inability to guide or control; hence the strange blendings of devotion and profligacy; exemplified in the Italian brigand who perpetually wears the Virgin's scapular round his neck; the lost woman who cherishes her picture in the haunt of vice; the gross-minded artisan who blasphemes against the Madonna of one altar, but vows to his confessor that he never has, nor ever could, so offend against her who is seen in effigy elsewhere! To omit altogether the idea of the Virgin Mother from devotional respects would be to err in the opposite extreme; and the earnest historian, or student, who will prefer dwelling on the brighter aspect in all moral movements, cannot forget what she has been to the feeling of ages, to learned and holy men, to inspired

soul, in form of an infant, by the Saviour, without the bodily assumption, is seen in a picture evidently of an ancient, and supposed to be of the Russian school. Perhaps one of the latest examples of this presentment, the transit of the soul without the assumption of the body, is in a relief on the tomb of the French Cardinal, Philip d'Alençon (deceased 1397) at *S. Maria in Trastevere*, where above the bier of Mary stands the Saviour with an infant in His arms. We may remember that not only to the Blessed Virgin, but also to St. John the Evangelist and the Magdalene has been ascribed the exemption from the lot of mortality; and the ascent of both in the body been at one period favourite subjects for art. Titian's masterpiece might alone suffice to claim respect for a legend so gloriously illustrated. In the details of treatment, we observe that earlier art always represents Mary as a mature and dignified matron, simply attired, with veiled head; but later, as the school declines, she becomes showy and vulgar; the crown takes the place of the veil, and jewels bedizen her person.

Poets, to glorious Artists; how her gentle virtues and lovely form have appealed to what is purest in the heart, influenced to elevate the rank of woman, to reflect new honour on maternity, to soften manners, to refine and humanise. Another interesting question now invites thought, as to the place that this idea and image ought to occupy in the universal Church of the Future?

It was between 432 and 440 that Sixtus III rebuilt the Liberian basilica, dedicating it as *S. Maria Mater Dei*, in honour of that divine maternity proclaimed at Ephesus—the most ancient church in Rome (perhaps in the whole world) dedicate to the Mother of Christ; one of the seven principal, and one of the four patriarchal basilicas, and therefore provided with its *porta sancta*, to be opened by the Pope with solemn ceremonial in the Holy Year, four times in each century. On this the munificent pontiff bestowed gifts of great price; among others a silver altar weighing 400 lbs, besides revenues, from houses and lands, amounting to 729 *aurei*, or gold pieces, per annum. Though the alterations of the last three centuries have made *S. Maria Maggiore* very different, externally indeed as remote in style as could be, from the church of the V century, it still contains much interesting detail and art of that period. Especially valuable are its mosaics, the most ancient specimens in Rome, save a very few of the time of Constantine (at the Lateran and S. Costanza), of such art in Christian application. And the series here still occupying its original place along the attics, is unique in character and importance, though no longer before us in its integrity as executed by order of Sixtus III; of its several compartments, that form a complete historic illustration, — two above the chief portals, and five others along the lateral walls being entirely new; six others having been destroyed for the opening of the great archways external to the splendid lateral chapels. The subjects of the thirty-one smaller compositions, carried in a double row along the attics, are from the histories of the Patriarchs, Moses, and Joshua; and in



their style they present analogy with classic reliefs which has suggested comparison with those on the Column of Trajan ; the new sources of inspiring ideas not having yet elicited characteristics of originality in treatment. Far too minute to be appreciated at the height where they are placed , these mosaics should be studied at the earliest hours of sunny days, when that beautiful basilica itself , still so impressive in its olden features , is seen to finest effect. Above the chancel-arch are the other series , far more valuable for the illustration of Christian doctrine : the throne of the Lamb as described in the Apocalypse , SS. Peter and Paul beside it ; and the four symbols of the Evangelists above ; the Annunciation ; the Angel appearing to Zachariah ; the Massacre of Innocents ; the Presentation in the Temple ; the Adoration of the Magi : Herod receiving the head of St. John the Baptist ; and , below these groups , a flock of sheep , type of the faithful , issuing from the mystic cities , Bethlehem and Jerusalem. We see here one curious example of the nimbus , round the head of Herod , as symbol of power , apart from sanctity. In certain details these mosaics have been altered , with a view to adapting them to modern devotional bias , in a manner that deserves reprobation ; — but Ciampini (*Monumenta vetera*) shows us in engraving what the originals were before this alteration , effected under Benedict XIV. In the group of the Adoration the Child *alone* occupied the throne , while opposite in the original work was seated , on another chair , an elderly person in a long blue mantle veiling the head — concluded by Ciampini to be the senior among the Magi ; the two others , younger , and both in the usual Oriental dress with trousers and Phrygian cap , being seen to approach at the same side , whilst the Mother *stood* beside the throne of the Child , — her figure recognisable from its resemblance to others in scenes where she appears in the same series. As this group is now before us , the erect figure is left out ; the seated one is converted into that of Mary , with a halo round the head ,

although in that original even such attribute (alike given to the Saviour and to all the Angels introduced) is *not* assigned to her!

In the subjects from the Old Testament the nimbus is given to the Deity and to Angels alone. These mosaics present the earliest examples of the Angelic figure in art—here, indeed, nobly conceived; for those winged Genii seen among the paintings in Catacomb chapels, have rather the allegoric than strictly religious character. And in the groups over the chancel-arch before us, it is especially the idea of the « Guardian Angel » that is manifest: in this character we see *two* of the majestic, white-robed and winged figures attending Mary at the Annunciation, *besides* the one who brings to her the celestial message; *three* accompanying Mary and Joseph to the temple for the Presentation; and, besides the one who announces to Zachariah the birth of St. John, another attending him near the altar of incense.

The most interesting of the now solitary churches on the Aventine Hill, *S. Sabina*, was built, as is set forth in a mosaic epigraph over the chief entrance, by Peter, a Roman priest of Illyrian birth, in the time of Celestinus I (about 418); though Anastasius assigns it to the succeeding pontificate of Sixtus III; and under date 499 it is named, in the acts of a council held by Symmachus, as among the parochial churches of Rome. Most of its venerable features were altered or effaced by that zealous destroyer and renovator, Sixtus V; and even the antique atrium, with columns of marble and granite, gave way to modern arrangement when a lateral was substituted to the chief entrance, for communication from without. The fine Corinthian colonnades of Parian marble between nave and aisles, still intact, present one of the very few examples to be seen in Rome of shafts and capitals correspondent in dimensions and style, among such antiques transferred from classic to Christian architecture. And one singular decorative detail, on a frieze carried above the arcades,

is the series of disks surmounted by crosses, inlaid in coloured marble, intended to represent the fans (*rosta*), that used to be hung between columns, amidst the folds of richly embroidered draperies with which the church was profusely adorned at the high festivals of olden time. Over the chief portals, above the long mosaic epigraph, are the figures, also mosaic, of two majestic females in flowing robes, whose allegoric character is expressed in the names here read: *Ecclesia ex circumcissione* (sic), and *Ecclesia ex gentibus* — almost unique examples of such personification of the Old and New Law, at least in this artistic form.

Higher on the same wall-surface were once seen the figures of SS. Peter and Paul, besides the four symbolic representations of the Evangelists, all sacrificed, with incredible barbarism, for the sake of some modern alteration in the building. There is an impressive character in this solitary church; a purity and sacred repose in its sombre yet graceful interior; and visits to it are pleasingly associated with the remembrance of summer-evening walks to the almost deserted Aventine, of quiet contemplation and solemnized effect in the long-drawn aisle or pillared cloister seen by fading light.

The Ostian basilica (St. Paul's), restored, after injuries through lightning, by Leo I, received at the same time new embellishments, especially in the mosaics then executed above the chancel-arch, which were fortunately saved from the flames in 1823; having been added to this interior's decoration at the cost of Galla Placidia, daughter of Theodosius, A. D. 440. The large mosaic composition here represents the Saviour's colossal figure with a wand, symbol of authority, in one hand; the other raised to bless; the four established symbols of the Evangelists; the four-and-twenty Elders offering crowns in adoration to Him; two Angels with wands, and SS. Peter and Paul within the spandrels below—the latter figures, as restored, having also wands in their hands, though (as Ciampini shows) they were without such implements in the original, each holding a scroll with the inscription

*Theodosius cæpit, perfecit Honorius aulam Doctoris mundi sacratam corpore Pauli.* That head of the Saviour (the first example where He appears neither youthful nor beautiful, but mature in years and stern in aspect), arresting the attention before any other object as we enter the vast Basilica by the western portals, dominates above the whole splendid interior with effect repulsive and startling; nor can we help seeing in this strangely unworthy conception the evidence of deterioration in the religious ideal, even more than of decline in the technical treatment peculiar to the age: it is the Son of God withdrawn from human sympathies, invested with attributes that only excite terror; the Judge and incomprehensible Deity effacing the Atoner and Redeemer—as in fact we are led to conclude, from certain ecclesiastical records of this period, that theological subtleties, by distancing from the reason and affection that transcendently Divine Object, prepared the way for the gloomiest fanaticism, the abject will-worship of the creature rather than the Creator. The stern and sullen character of this head also calls to mind the significant change effected in Christian ideas respecting the personality of Our Lord: the primitive Church, in a spirit of extreme reaction against the sensualism and worship of form in Paganism, assuming absolutely plain and mean characteristics in His exterior; the later Christian ages, after sacred Art had begun more boldly to strike into its new career, tending to admission of types from classic antiquity, recognisable in the youthfulness and beauty of the Divine figure as seen among reliefs on sarcophagi; the ages subsequent, when ascetic principles and subtle theologic distinctions had cast a different hue over the whole inner life of the Church, gradually departing from that more genial image, till the expression given to the Incarnate Deity became only calculated to excite a fanatical awe or depressingly superstitious fear. Justin, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria support that less attractive view: *nec humanæ honestatis corpus fuit, nedum celestis claritatis*, says Tertullian; « the body of



Jesus was without comeliness » — το Ἰησοῦ σῶμα δυσσευδὲς — says Origen (*ad Cels.*). But in the IV century appears the higher and poetic conception, vindicated by Chrysostom and Jerome: « *Certe fulgor iste et majestas divinitatis occultae, quae etiam in humana facie relucebat, ex primo ad se videntes trahere poterat aspectu* » (Hieronim. ep. 65, cap. 8 *ad Princip. Virg.*) (1). It is not till late in the XIII century that we find this worthier ideal again beginning to assert itself in art-treatment, accordant, in such nobler conception, with the rapture of poetic imagining:

Glory to God, and to the Power who came  
In filial duty clothed with Love Divine,  
That made His human tabernacle shine  
Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame!

or, in another utterance —

— was it not a thing to rise on death  
With its remembered light, that face of thine,  
Redeemer, dimmed by this world's misty breath,  
Yet mournfully, mysteriously divine!  
Oh! that calm, sorrowful, prophetic eye,  
With its dark depths of grief, love, majesty,  
And the pale glory of the brow! —

But from such higher ideal the asceticism of the Middle Ages, and especially the Greek school to which the work before us probably belongs, became at last totally alienated.

It is with interest one reads over the chancel-arch here the sole contemporary epigraph extant with the name of the Pontiff who saved Rome from Attila: *Placidiae pia mens operis decus homine (sic) paterni gaudet pontificis studio splendere Leonis*. In that mosaic the mystic animals, like the Apostles,

(1) « Assuredly that effulgence and majesty of the occult divinity, which shone forth even from the human countenance, might at the first aspect have attracted all beholders towards Him ».

have the large nimbus; and the twenty-four Elders offering crowns to the Saviour were originally distinguished, twelve by the veiled and twelve by the unveiled head, as representatives, the former of Saints under the Law, the latter of those under the Gospel; but renovating touches have made the costumes all alike. As well as the mosaics at S. Maria Maggiore, these are cited by Pope Adrian I in his letter to Charlemagne written for refutation of the iconoclast theories.

Another art-work erected by St. Leo is that sternly-expressive bronze of St. Peter, in the great Basilica, where is kept up the annual usage of clothing and crowning, with cumbrous finery and most unpleasant effect, the Apostle's figure on his festival. It is supposed this seated statue was ordered to commemorate the deliverance of Rome from Attila—perhaps in intent to express a sentiment referring such providential escape to St. Peter's intercession. But this tradition, reflecting so much interest on that image, object of the veneration of ages, (whose proof we see impressed on the foot worn away by kisses), can only be admitted with reserve, as other origin—probably from the Byzantine school—is inferrible from the Greek inscription (v. Mabillon) once read on the base of its ancient marble chair—the actual one being not older than the XV century—apparently referring to some gilt representation of the Saviour on its front: « Behold here God the Word in gold, the divinely hewn rock, treading upon which I do not totter »—allusive evidently to St. Peter's walking on the sea.

The Baptistry of the Lateran, erroneously ascribed to Constantine, is an essentially-unaltered example of the architecture of this period; for though its frescoes and decorations were added by various Popes within modern date, the architectonic plan, the graceful colonnade of porphyry and white marble within the octagon, the cupola and formation of the font for Baptism by immersion, remain still in their original integrity. Its foundation may be ascribed to Celestine I; its completion to Sixtus III, as to whom Anastasius tells us that those porphyry columns were among donations

from him to this beautiful building ; its two lateral chapels being additions by Pope Hilary ; the epigraph over an entrance to one of which preserves, though renewed, the words inscribed by order of that Pope : *Liberatori suo B. Joanni Evangelistae Hilarius Episcopus famulus Christi*, in allusion to his escape from the absolute danger to life encountered whilst acting as legate of Leo I., at the second Council of Ephesus—such the fury of fanatic monks in the differences dividing that assemblage—sad example of the decline of practical Christianity through the encroachment of theologic zeal ! — the worship of Dogma to the exclusion of Love !

The chapel dedicated to the Baptist contains a beautiful mosaic decoration, of this period, on a golden ground occupying the entire vault : in the centre, the Divine Lamb with radiated nimbus ; and on the spaces around, birds beside vases full of fruit, in graceful symbolism of the joys of Paradise. When this interior was renovated, in the last century, its rich inlaid pavement and the marble incrustation of its walls, all of the original architecture, were allowed to disappear ! but the spirally fluted columns of serpentine over its altar, are among its antique adornments still preserved, and indeed rare examples. Another chapel was built by Pope Hilary in connection with this Baptistery, and dedicated to the Cross : but this either fell into ruin, or was demolished, in the time of Sixtus V. The complex ceremonial of the Baptism of Adults on Holy Saturday, as performed in the octagonal building, affords the best occasion for observing all the mystic symbolism of that rite, developed, (as we have seen), into its present form soon after the Church had passed from the state of conflict into that of triumph.

We should quit Rome's walls by the Lateran Gate to visit another example, in ruin, of the sacred architecture dating from the time of the first Pope Leo—that lately-disinterred basilica on the Latin Way, amidst impressive solitude, near the painted mausolea upon the track where the ancient road crossed an extent of table land, now abandoned to pasturage.

It is on record that this church, dedicate to St. Stephen, was built at the expense and by the desire of a pious Roman lady, Demetria, who escaped from the Capital with her mother during the Gothic siege, passed to Carthage, and there soon took the veil as a consecrated nun. This building is known to have been restored by Leo III at the end of the VIII, or early in the IX century. Brought to light once more by excavation (1858), after having been, through unaccountable vicissitudes in the level of the Campagna-soil, buried and forgotten during many ages, it now presents, in low ruins of substructions, a still intelligible example of the arrangements and economic disposal proper to the primitive Basilica—the outer portico (or *narthex*; the *cantharus* (for washing the hands and face); nave and aisles, divided once by forty columns; crypt chapel at the end of the nave (in two compartments with an apsidal termination), supposed the sepulchre of some distinguished family, being an example of the so-called *basilichetta*; an elevated choir enclosed by parapet-walls; an isolated high altar, with the confessional (or sacred tomb) opening below, descended into by steps, and visible from above through a *fenestrella*, so that the faithful might have lowered kerchiefs or mantles to touch the sepulchre; beyond the altar, the semicircular apse for the bishop's throne and seats of the clergy; and at the extremity of one aisle, a baptistery, distinct from the church, with entrance at each of its four sides. Referring to this long-buried edifice, the Bollandists inform us that St. Leo, after the Vandal invasion, « induced Demetria to found a basilica, dedicate to St. Stephen, on her estate »; and we are told of that pious lady's undertaking by Anastasius also.

Whether the other disinterred basilica of St. Alexander on the Nomentan Way, whose vicissitudes have been so similar, be ascribable to the IV, or V century, its actual conditions and details present such analogies with that on the Latin Way, that the two may be classed together, and visited in the course of the same studies. That Pontiff suffered A. D. 419,



and was buried, together with his companions in martyrdom, Eventius and Theodulus, near the site of his death, « at the seventh mile-stone on the Nomentan Way », as Anastasius tells us; funeral honours being paid to the three by a Christian matron, Severina; and soon, we may suppose, rose over the tomb erected by her pious care, an oratory, which became, in a later age, enclosed within the walls of a basilica, whence the relics of the three martyrs were removed, early in the V century, by Celestine I, to the new church of Saint Sabina, beneath whose high altar they still remain.

The excavation in search of this buried temple was undertaken by Signor Guidi, a well-known archaeologist and explorer in the sphere of Roman antiquities. In their present state the ruins, completely roofless, occupy an area surrounded by low substructures against the shelving banks that enclose them, and into which we descend by an ancient marble staircase; this disposal making it apparent that from the first the church was partially below the level of the Campagna.

At the south-western end are the tribune and high altar; the latter magnificent even as it was found in ruin, with mensa of fine porphyry, rich incrustations of alabaster and veined Phrygian marble, columns of *giallo antico* supporting its canopy, or ciborium; the *fenestrella* on both fronts, now restored with its marble grating (*transennae*), the fragments of which were strewn around, and through which is visible the sepulchre of St. Alexander and Eventius, his companion in martyrdom. Of the inscription above the *transennae* remain the words: *et Alexandro Delicatus voto posuit dedicante Aepiscop.* — singular in this respect, that the Roman Bishop is named *second*, after his fellow-sufferer, the « Delicatus », whose name follows, being no doubt the ecclesiastic who was appointed to officiate here and daily celebrate Mass in honour of the Martyrs. Beyond the altar is the apsidal tribune, with its antique marble throne still preserved; in front, the ambones, opening, like mere niches, in the para-

pet wall that encloses the choir. From one side of the nave, is entered a spacious chapel, the decoration of which was splendid, containing a tomb under an arched vault like the *archosolia* in Catacombs, once also provided with its marble grating, and indicated as that of a martyr by the extant epigraph in a single word: MARTYRI — no other (as confidently assumed) than the resting place of the presbyter Theodulus, to whom this chapel would have been dedicated.

The « Acts » of the Martyrs Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus, tell us that Severina laid the bodies of the first two in one monument; that of the third elsewhere, without farther particularising — *Theodulum vero alibi sepelivit*. It is in the same document we learn that a *bishop* was ordained by Pope Sixtus I, on the request of Severina, for officiating at this church; but the statement follows that « up to the present day the place has its own *priest* » for such service. From one end of the nave is entered a small baptistery, here also distinct from the church, with marble font, found broken; and contiguous, another compartment in which appear to have been seats, this being recognised as the *Consignatorium Ablutorum*, where neophytes used to assemble after Baptism to receive the chrism, or confirmation, from the bishop. Near this, at the entrance of the buildings from the highway, are two columns of grey marble with capitals of the debased Corinthian order, again erect on their high pedestals. A singular feature in this church's plan is that the high altar is so placed as to be unsymmetric in relation to the rest, corresponding neither to the bearings nor perspective lines of the interior — only to be accounted for on the conjecture that this was purposely preferred in order to satisfy the faithful as to the original site of the Martyr's tomb, and the fact that no alteration had been made for adapting that sacred centre to any architectural arrangement. Among epitaphs on the pavement we notice one to a youth of fourteen years, named Apollo, with the qualification *rotus Deo*, attesting the practice of dedicating to the priesthood at an age

so far from mature for the momentous decision ; and another nameless , with the words , like memory's sigh over life's long sorrows : *post varias curas , post longae monia* (sic) *vitae*.

The Catacombs , entered from this church , and excavated at the same level , were known to antiquity as the cemetery *ad Nymphas* , opened in the estate of the matron Severina , where it is traditional that St. Peter was her guest , and that converts were baptized by the Apostle's hand.

It is probable that here , as at St. Stephen's on the Latin Way , a village (*pagus*) extended around the sacred centre , and had its burial-place in these subterraneans , ascertained to have been used for interment under Consulates so late as 428 and 437. The following , rudely traced on the mortar outside of a tomb , might be cited for controversial purposes , as it attests both faith in the Saviour's Divinity and the idea of efficacious prayer offered by those in Heaven for those on earth : *Vivi Ila nel Dio Cristo in pace. Pregha Ila per Silvina. Pregha cum Alessandro* — but the language does not indicate remote antiquity.

These hypogees are generally lower than other catacombs though in some places rising to considerable height , and on ground uneven , with abrupt acclivities and descents. Winding in various directions , they are , at many places , lighted from above , so that the visitor is seldom left in rayless gloom ; but the feeble gleam admitted only serves to make « darkness visible » , revealing dismal depths , receding vistas , and files of narrow sepulchres. One deposit , of unusual width , contains bones , besides iron instruments assumed to have been for torture ; among others , a long narrow iron ladle , used for pouring molten lead down the victim's throat. Not far from this is the inscription , partly in Greek letters — *Saviniane spiritus in bono* ; and remains of painting , wreaths and foliage , much obscured , in emblem of the paradisaic garden. Not a few marble slabs , covering sepulchral niches yet unopened , have Pagan inscriptions of the best orthography (usually reversed) , commencing with the initial formula , D. M. Most of

the *loculi*, which rise in several tiers, are covered with brick, and have no inscriptions. Terra cotta lamps and small glass vases, embedded in the soil, were found placed on the outside of several deposits; and the accepted tests were not wanting to indicate martyrdom in regard to the dead reposing in some of these tombs. The dusky red stains on broken vases have indeed the appearance of blood; which, beyond doubt, justifies the conclusion that here we see the original resting places of martyrs.

After the interesting discoveries on this site, Pius IX ordered that the festival of St. Alexander (3rd May) should thenceforth be religiously solemnized in his basilica, now a roofless ruin. The Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda annually celebrates, at the restored altar, a Mass followed by the *Te Deum*, at which all the students of that college assist. I attended on one recurrence when even the early morning of a May-day was clouded and threatening; but a gloomy sky harmonised with the utter solitude and mournful character of the Campagna hence in view. Crimson and gold hangings, gorgeous vestments, and taper-light seemed in strange contrast with the dull tints and desolation of the scene; and the simple but solemn chant of the Ambrosian Hymn burst impressively upon the silence after the communion. Such a service exemplified the self-adapting virtue of the Latin Rite, and the picturesque dignity with which it enters into whatever circumstances amid which it may rear its altars—in this instance indeed suggestive of profounder meaning, for it seemed like a symbol of triumphant Religion luminous amidst the clouds of our dark horizon on earth!

Tradition ascribes to the time of the same St. Alexander the church that first received the sacred deposit of St. Peter's chains, borne in the Mamertine prisons; the supposed foundress being Theodora, sister of Hermes, Prefect of Rome, who, like her brother, had been converted by that holy bishop; and legend, taking bolder flight, assumes that St. Peter himself founded the original oratory, dedicating it to the Saviour.



Historically, however, the actual « St Peter in Vinculis » pertains to the period here considered, having been raised by the Empress Eudoxia, from whom it takes the title, « Eudoxian Basilica ». And soon after that origin did it receive the precious relic suggestive of its other more popular name—the chains borne by the Apostle both at Jerusalem and Rome, one of which, obtained at the former city by Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II, was sent as a present to her daughter, the wife of Valentinian III, so notorious in the annals of this century. Soon afterwards as legend states, either Sixtus III or Leo I witnessed within this new church the miraculous uniting, to be for riveted together, of the *two* chains, by which the Apostle had been bound in the two cities; and the day of this occurrence, the 1st of August, was therefore appointed to be kept sacred by the Latin Church; the festival of St Peter's Chains taking the place, as did several others, of a Pagan observance, that, namely, for which the same day was marked in the ancient calendar as sacred to Caesar Augustus. Several Popes, from the IX to the XV century, renewed or embellished this church on the Esquiline Hill; and perhaps the most thorough alteration was that, with the architecture of Baccio Pintelli, ordered by the Cardinal Titular, Della Rovere (afterwards Julius II). At present, probably, nothing of the original remains as in old time, save the beautiful colonnades of Greek marble, whose capitals indeed are new; and here, instead of the horizontal architrave preferred at S. Maria Maggiore, we see the round-headed arch, of narrow span, a feature that marks the second phase in the Romanesque Basilica. The present atrium is the building of Pintelli; the vaulting, in bad taste, by an architect engaged in 1705. There is still, however, a character of majestic harmony in this spacious temple-interior. As to the detail of roofing, it seems certain that the early basilicas had rafters without ceiling, left exposed but highly ornamented, sometimes as at St. Paul's, plated with gilt metal, and the intervening spaces filled with similarly adorned or painted

woodwork; the naked roof and beams, such as now seen at S. Sabina, being a later expedient resulting from poverty; and the flat coffered ceiling, now so gorgeous with carving and gilding in many Roman churches, an inappropriate, comparatively modern accessory. The earliest form of window was the round-arched, and (for façades) the circular, or « ox-eye »; and before glass became common, this was filled, as still the case at SS. *Vincenzo ed Anastasio* and *S. Giovanni a Porta Latina*, with marble plates pierced with small round holes for light; or, more rarely, with diaphanous marble, as at S. Miniato (Florence) (4).

The purity and repose of the primitive Basilica-type seem to convey silent evidence in favour of the worship to which it was consecrate. May we not infer that a quiet dignity, solemn and subdued, while rich in mystic symbolism and meaning, must have distinguished the rites for which such sanctuaries were created?

In order to finish our study of this epoch's monuments, we must return to the City, and visit a church of very different character, the first example of a style yet new in the Christian architecture of Rome and the West.

To this century belongs the architecture, though not the mosaic-decoration, of one of the most interesting and curious Roman edifices, *S. Stefano Rotondo*. Solitary and neglected, scarce visited by worshippers save on the days of stations, this quiet sanctuary, amidst an untenanted region on the Coelian Hill, impresses by a certain gracefulness, and by an air of venerable antiquity, that seems to render it a connecting link between the Pagan and the Christian Past. It is the largest circular building of its description that exists;

(4) The Doric colonnade at *S. Pietro in Vincoli*, evidently antique, and probably from the *Thermae of Trajan*, over part of which this church is built, well exemplifies the Roman modification of that order: here the Doric shaft has the height of 7 diameters and three-fourths; while at the temple of Theseus, Athens, it has about 6, and at Paestum only four  $4\frac{1}{5}$  diameters.

and after having been long regarded by Italian antiquarians as a Pagan temple, either of Faunus, Jupiter, Bacchus, or the Emperor Claudius, the Germans (see Bunsen, *Beschreibung*) have clearly shewn, arguing from its very inferior masonry of the period of deep decline, that it was not merely converted from Heathen to Christian uses in the V century, but built from its foundations between 467-483, though not embellished with its richer ornaments till between 523-530, when marble incrustations and mosaics were added by Popes John I and Felix IV. As it stood in the year 1440, abandoned and roofless, but still bearing traces of past magnificence, Flavio Biondo describes it; that writer inferring that it must have been one of the most splendid churches in Rome. Its ruin had commenced probably before the transfer of the Papal residence to Avignon. Nicholas V ordered the restoration which was, in fact, a sacrifice of antique beauty with diminution of scale; one entire aisle being cut off, and the arcades dividing this from the inner one walled up in order to narrow the circular area. A portico was added with a new entrance, where had been no doorway in the original plan, the principal entrance having formerly opened on the Via Metronis (or Metronia), which traversed this height of the Coelian, leading to that now closed gateway of the same name. The interior is still beautiful, though every modern detail is in false taste. Fifty-eight columns (all granite, except one of Parian, two of Carystian marble) with Ionic capitals, divide the circular aisle from the centre, as they once divided the existing from the lost compartment; two loftier shafts, with two pilasters, supporting an attic that traverses the rotunda in its diameter; the cupola being now replaced by a plain flat ceiling of woodwork. In the windows of the attic, under this roof, we see rude attempts at tracery, and some slight remains of glass painting. The tribune, opposite to which was the ancient entrance, contained no altar prior to the year 650, not having originally served as choir, the high altar being in the centre; and this section (now the choir) was probably

built by Pope Theodore after the discovery (said to have been through revelation), of the bodies of SS. Primus and Felicianus, two brothers of patrician birth, who suffered together on the Nomentan Way, and were buried in the Catacombs near, A. D. 295. The mosaics on its low apse represent those Martyrs standing beside a large cross, studded with jewels, over which hovers the Divine Dove; each with a book in his hand, each dressed alike in long white garments, with broad purple laticlave folded over one arm: both in treatment and costume these figures displaying the influences of a school still classic, — the composition not without a certain religious dignity. One can only notice to condemn the works of modern art in this church—as well the toy-like, elaborate tabernacle (the ingenious manufacture of a German baker) over the altar in the midst, and the repulsive frescoes by Tempesta and Pomeranci (XVI century) that cover the walls of the aisle with ghastly scenes of martyrdom, in which the merely physical horror predominates, exemplifying that false direction given to modern piety which arrests attention on man rather than on Deity, and would make emotion do the work of principle. In order to form a correct idea of this church's original plan, we should visit the pleasant vineyard, which extends beyond the rotunda of old walls along the Coelian slopes, commanding one of those impressive views, where ruin, landscape, city and solitude are combined, so peculiar to Rome. Here we see the antique constructions of the outer aisle, and its now built-up arcades, with five columns at each point of the compass (the four original ingresses), mullioned and circular windows with tracery; and other fragments of marble decoration, the portions less ruinous being now used as granaries; the space between the limits of the now reduced and the originally much ampler edifice, measuring 32 feet. Close to *S. Stefano* once stood a more ancient church dedicated to St. Erasmus, with a monastery of which St. Benedict was founder, Pope Deodatus (about A. D. 672) the restorer; and of which considerable ruins,



even the paintings on inner wall-surfaces, remained till about the end of the XVI century ; some vaguely defined but picturesque piles of brickwork , near the gateway leading to the porch of S. Stefano from the road , being no doubt a remnant of the same cloisters , once known to History.

The letters of St. Jerome and St. Paulinus , together with the *Civitas Dei* , present to us the picture of this age in truthful colouring ; and another work of great importance in the same bearing is the Treatise by Salvian on the Divine Government , that strikingly displays the darker aspects , the deep-seated moral disease preying on the life of society under the Empire now in decline ; the general corruption among nominal Christians , the infatuate passion for amusements in the midst of public calamities , and the profanities in the holy place , such as above noticed with reference to Rome ; though it is especially of the transalpine provinces that the Marseillean presbyter speaks. Whenever it was rumoured in the church that the spectacles of the arena were about to begin , the people used to desist from worship and rush to the amphitheatre — *spernitur templum Dei , ut curratur ad theatrum !* Venus was still worshipped in the theatre , Minerva in the gymnasium ; Neptune in the circus ; Mars in the arena ; Mercury in the palaestra — but perhaps such statements are metaphorical. « The City of Rome is besieged and captured ; have the Romans therefore ceased to blaspheme and to rage ! » Salvian seems to open his mind to the conviction that the cause of the ancient Empire was not the cause of Christian civilization ; that her chastisement and humiliation might be subservient to higher interests in the Future. He takes a large and liberal view of the terms of Christian Communion , implying nothing less than the admission of all baptized believers into the Catholic Church : « What are the treasures bestowed by Deity upon Christians ! — the Law , the Prophets , the Gospel , the Apostolic writings , the blessing of regeneration , the grace of Baptism , the unction of sacred chrism , by which we become a peculiar people , and truly that of God. » The

Sermons of St. Leo illustrate the progress of ideas respecting the Christian vocation of Rome; and while claiming a distinct supremacy for St. Peter, the eloquent pontiff seems to understand the *faith* of that Apostle, in his confession of the Divine Messiah, to be the true foundation-rock. In regard to legends of the Blessed Virgin, I should add that the earliest ascertainable date of the representation of her assumption in Art, is about 1230, when the subject was introduced by Giunta Pisano among his frescoes at the great Franciscan Church, Assisi; Mary there appearing to ascend together with the Saviour, while her empty tomb is seen below—see Agincourt (*Peinture*, Pl. 402); and in the same work (Pl. 83) is given the Greco-ruthenic picture, of the XI century, representing the transit of her soul, like an infant, received into the Saviour's arms, without the assumption of the body. The narrative of that miraculous event by St. Gregory of Tours dates about the year 590; and I believe the earliest recorded instance of direct invocation to Mary is in the life of St Justina, martyr under Diocletian, as written in the IV century by Gregory Nazianzen—that legend wrought up so finely into the mystic tragedy, « El Magico Prodigioso », by Calderon (1).

(1) Salvianus, *de Gubernatione Dei*, l. III, 2, 9, VI, 2, 3, 4, 44, 42, VII, 46, 48; St. Leo, *Sermones* on anniversary of his election; *Beschreibung der Stadt Rom*, by Bunsen and other German archaeologists (for Roman churches the very best authority); Moroni, *Dizionario*, (for ecclesiastical details); Mozzoni, *Tavole cronologiche di Storia Ecclesiastica*; Okeley, « Christian Architecture in Italy »; Ricci, *Storia ec*; Mrs Jameson, « Legends of the Madonna »; and « History of Our Lord in Art », edited by Lady Eastlake. St. Jerome mentions (*Ep. ad Nepotian.*) the gilded ceilings in churches — *auro splendent taquearia*; and as to the bronze statue of St. Peter, erected by St. Leo, the assertion that it was formed from that of Jupiter Tonans in the Capitoline Temple, melted down and recast, is found in *Memorie storiche illustrate de' Medici*, Rome, 1865.

## CHRONOLOGY OF MONUMENTS.

ROME : St. Vitalis (modernized 1595), St. Alexius (restoration of church of St. Boniface, founded 303, modernized 1724-30) — between 401 and 417; St. Sabina, about 428; Lateran Baptistery, 433-'40; S. Maria Maggiore rebuilt, 434; restorations and mosaics at St. Paul's, about 440; S. Stefano de' Mori (behind St. Peter's, renewed 1706, the sculptured portal alone antique) 440; St. Peter in Vinculis, about 442; St. Stephen on the Latin Way, about 455; chapels at the Lateran Baptistery, 462-'68; S. Stefano Rotondo, and St. Bibiana (modernized in the XVII century), 468-'83.

RAVENNA : S. Agata Maggiore, about 400; St. John the Evangelist, 425; Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, 440; mosaics in Baptistery, 451;

COMO : SS. Peter and Paul, (once the cathedral, now St. Abondio) 469.

## VII.

### **Epoch of the Gothic and Greek Wars.**

IN the object of studying Christian Monuments of the VI century, we will commence at the church of SS. Cosmo and Damian, on the Forum, founded by Pope Felix IV between 526-530, in connection with the circular domed temple long popularly called that of Romulus, but determined by the German antiquarians to be in reality that of the Penates. A modernization of the XVII century has much altered the character of this church, and reduced its height through the raising of the pavement so as to form a crypt out of the lower portion. Still, however, are left in their integrity, though not without modern touches, the finely conceived mosaics in an apse, unfortunately ill-lighted and in part concealed by a cumbrous high altar, representing the Saviour between groups consisting of the martyred physicians to whom this church is dedicate, SS. Peter and Paul, St. Theodore, and Pope Felix, the founder; but the last-named figure entirely modern as restored in the time of Alexander VII, and said to be, in its actual aspect, a portrait of Gregory XIII. The Saviour's figure here is one of the last examples found, before the total decline in sacred Art, of a truly noble and poetic ideal, instead of the sternly-ascetic and repulsive, in the presentment of this sublime subject: majestically standing on bright clouds, clad in long garments (the Roman pallium and toga) of golden cloth embroidered with the mystic *Tau*, a scroll held in the left hand, whilst the right arm is extended in



action that seems both to command and bless—the countenance distinguished by solemnity and a benign graciousness; the long hair, of dark auburn, falling in massive curls down the face and neck; the draperies and extremities designed with a freedom subsequently lost in declining Art. SS. Cosmo and Damian are offering crowns (the Martyr's symbol and trophy) of laurel-leaves set with a large gem in front; St. Peter and Paul are here treated conformably to the long-prevailing traditionary types of those two Apostles in artistic presentment; the Pope, who carries a model of the church, wears the pontific vestments, stole, and shoes embroidered with the Cross, by which Prelates were now distinguished among their Clergy—though neither mitre nor crozier had yet appeared. As to costume, its character, in all the other figures here, is classico-Roman, without anything symbolic, except the *Tau* on the garments of the Apostles, as well as on the Saviour's, which letter, regarded by the Heathens as a sign of life, felicity, or safety, became one form of the hidden Cross for the Christians, and is first introduced in their earlier art-efforts within the range of Catacombs (1). Other symbols *apart* from the figures introduced in this fine mosaic are the Star, the Phenix, the Palm, the mystic cities, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the Jordan flowing across the foreground; while below, along a frieze, are twelve sheep representing the Apostles, all turning towards a Lamb in the centre, that « slain from the foundations of the world », whose head is crowned by the nimbus, and whose feet rest on a mount whence are gushing the four rivers of Paradise, understood, among different senses, as typical of the Evangelists. Above, on the triumphal arch, is another representation of the Divine Lamb, illustrating the Apocalyptic vision, seated on a throne, with the seven-sealed book and seven candelabra: beside it, the four established symbols of the Evangelists (two of which, however, have been lost through the alterations effected in the XVII century), and two figures offering crowns—sole remnant of a group of the four-and-twenty El-

ders, alike sacrificed by that Vandalism so frequently and unpardonably carried out in works of pseudo-restoration at Rome.

Leaving this spot, we may pursue our walk beyond the City's walls, and, quitting by the Tiburtine Gate, visit the fine old Basilica of St. Laurence, lately restored with somewhat better taste (though not without destruction of mediaeval details entitled to highest respect) than has been shown in other similar enterprises by Roman architects. Pope Pelagius II (572—90) made use of copious spoils from antique edifices in constructing the church here founded by him over the tomb of St. Laurence, already comprised within an oratory erected by Constantine, afterwards enlarged or embellished by Theodosius, as implied in the epigraph placed here by Galla Placidia (*operis deus omne paterni*); later restored by Sixtus III and Leo I; and this basilica of Pelagius eventually became the choir only of a much ampler church, when *S. Lorenzo* rose into new importance, rebuilt, and in plan much altered, by Honorius III, about 1216.

It has been assumed (v. Gregorius, *Gesch. der Stadt Rom.*) that Pelagius himself added a fore-church, reducing the more antique edifice to a choir, elevated above the original level, and ascended by steps from the nave, which Honorius III prolonged in the form and to the extent of the actual structure. And the distich still seen under the mosaic group perhaps alludes to that twofold building under the earlier pontificate:

*Martyrium flaminis olim Levita subisti  
Jure tuis templis lux veneranda redit.*

Italian writers ascribe the entire building of the inner church to Pelagius; and some suppose that the beautiful colonnade of fluted pillars—with Victories and trophies on their finely chiselled capitals—stood here before that Pope's time; also that the upper tier of smaller columns, above their ancient architrave, was his addition to those details obviously

accumulated from the rich spoils of some classic temple. The mosaics, executed under Pelagius, adorn what, in consequence of those changes, has become the inner instead of the outer side of the triumphal arch; no longer visible from the nave, but from the tribune, whose position towards the chief portal and main edifice has been reversed. These art-works have suffered injury through the opening of two windows (since walled up), and through restoration in painting instead of in the same material originally used. At the centre of the group is the Saviour, of youthful but severe aspect, seated on a globe, with a long cross (or *crux hastata*) in one hand, the other being raised to bless; beside Him are SS. Peter and Paul, the former also holding a wand (the well-known symbol of authority, assigned to this Apostle from the period of Catacomb Art); SS. Stephen, Laurence, Hippolytus, and Pope Pelagius (in white vestments) presenting the model of his basilica—a mode of distinguishing the founders of churches peculiar to, and continued throughout, the period of the mediaeval Mosaic School; the attributes here given to St. Laurence being the long wand and book of the Gospels, proper to a deacon, while Hippolytus, as a martyr without other special attribute, offers a leafy crown set with gems; and St. Paul, without any symbol, is distinguished by the philosophic type of his head; in ecclesiastical costume this mosaic serving to show how far prevailed, even up to this period, the simplicity recommended by St. Jerome, who goes so far as even to prohibit pure white to the cleric's garments (*vestes pullas aequè devita, at candidas*, Ep. ad Nepot.). The two mystic cities are also introduced; and here also we perceive the same classic characteristics, as elsewhere, in general treatment. Hitherto, indeed, we have seen in Rome's Christian Mosaics much rather the influence of the Past than the rise of any new ideas, or artistic manner peculiar to more modern Ages. From the ruins of decayed Empire the new birth of vivifying Genius, informed by the virtue of Di-

vine Religion, was yet unaccomplished, or but in the first stage of travail.

The VI century opens in Rome with an event of political importance—the festive ingress of Theodoric, who had assumed the yet novel title, « King of Italy » — a Christian, but repudiating the doctrine deemed most essential to orthodox faith; he was received in the Imperial City with pomps that might have reminded of the triumphs of Caesars; welcomed, even before passing the gates, by the Pope with his clergy in solemn procession. Proceeding at once to the Curia (or Senate-house) this Arian conqueror made an allocution to the people « in the place called Palma », (« probably », adds Muratori, « some great hall of the Imperial Palace »). He is said to have been struck with admiration at the majesty, decorum, and scrupulously-observed etiquette of the assembled Senate, still affecting all its ancient dignities. Desiring popularity, he revived the largesses of old, assigning an annual allowance of 20,000 bushels of grain to the populace; and (with intelligent purpose) an annual subvention to be raised from the wine-tax for restoring the Caesars' Palace, the City's walls, and other public buildings.

Gibbon tells us that « a professed architect, the annual sum of 200 lbs in gold, 25,000 tiles, and the receipt of customs from the Lucrine lake » were the means assigned for these well-ordered restorations. And the edicts passed by the Gothic King at Rome were framed to prevent the maltreatment, neglect, or spoliation of classic monuments by the City's own inhabitants; also, with similar care rendered necessary by the barbaric propensities of a degenerate people, to protect against outrage all antique statues in public places (« Decline and Fall », ch. XXXIX). Games, like those ever the delight of Pagan multitudes, were now given in the Circus Maximus, whose buildings we may suppose to have stood at this period in their antique integrity. The Mausoleum of Hadrian, now fortified (though not for the first time) be-



came the « *Castrum Theodorici* ». A Pretorian Prefect and a Patrician were created ; the political promises made by the Gothic King to the Roman people were engraved on a bronze tablet to be left exposed on the Forum , near the Curia , for future ages. It is evident that , at this period , no substantial power was exercised or efficient government carried on in Rome by the Greek Emperor , though civic authorities still acted in his name , and the Popes acknowledged his sovereignty.

The designs of ambition and tempests of passion that now began to surge around the envied Chair of St. Peter , seem a fatal earnest of the contests fraught with disaster , that have proceeded from , or been fostered by , this sacerdotal sovereignty in less distant ages. In the year 503 the struggle between Symmachus and the Antipope Laurence was still continuing , — had indeed attained the most formidable proportions , with bloodshed , massacre , outrages , assault of defenceless ecclesiastics in the streets. The turbulent ex-Consul , Festus , still carried on civil war against the Senate and the Pope ; priests and laymen , who had sided with Symmachus , were assassinated daily. That Pontiff with his Clergy , on their way to attend a Council convened for his justification before the adverse party , were attacked and driven from the ground by showers of stones ! During four years subsequent the Antipope persisted in his violent assertion of claims , occupying several churches , converting the house of God into a fortress of lawless power ! This fierce contest lasted even long after the above-mentioned interposition of the Gothic King , who decreed that all the churches held by Laurence should be restored to Symmachus , and that whoever had been elected first by the due majority should be henceforth held legitimate in the succession to the Roman See. Proof of the rapidly-extending power attached to this Pontificate is found in the nomination , made by Symmachus (as by Zosimus) of a Vicar in Gaul , with faculty for the convoking of Councils ; St. Cesarius , Bishop of Arles , being so appointed with bestowal of the *pallium* , which he

was the first prelate in the West to receive, as sign of office conferred, from Rome. During nearly sixteen year's occupation of St. Peter's chair, Symmachus proved one of the most active and munificent Popes in such public works as the restoration and adornment of churches, on which he bestowed a wealth of offerings in gold and silver, that excites astonishment when we read the catalogue given by Anastasius. Among basilicas founded by him were those of Saint Andrew (near St. Peter's), St. Pancrace on the Via Vitellia, St. Agatha on the Aurelian Way, SS. Silvester and Martin, among the ruins of Trajan's Therma; among other new works and repairs, were the staircase before St. Peter's, and two episcopalia (Papal residences) lateral to that church; the enlargement of the basilica of St. Michael; the entire renovation of St. Agnes on the Nomentan Way, and of the tribune of St. Paul's; the erection of oratories at several other churches, also that of a staircase external to the tribune at SS. *Giovanni e Paolo* — some trace of which is still visible on the hemicycle in brickwork. We read, among his gifts, of *confessionals* (altars, to contain revered relics, for crypt—chapels) wrought in silver, for the churches of St. Andrew, St. Thomas, Saint Cassianus, SS. Protus and Hyacinthus, St. Apollinaris, Saint Sophius; of images in silver of the Saviour and the twelve Apostles (altogether weighing 120 lbs) for the Ostian Basilica; and, for the Vatican, a golden Cross set with gems to contain a relic of the true wood on which the Saviour suffered. Baths built for the use of monks, and perhaps also for pilgrims, at the same basilica on the Ostian Way, and at that of St. Pancrace, attest the practical sense that guided this energetic Pope; as his charitable zeal is also shown, with still more honour to his memory, in his erection of hospices for the poor adjacent to the great basilicas, then alike extramural, of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Laurence. Besides these public works, other charities were exercised by Symmachus with expenditure still more surprising when we consider the then depressed conditions of Rome, in the redemption

of citizens sold into slavery, and the maintenance of several exiled African Bishops driven to Sardinia through the persecuting tyranny of the Vandals.

A circumstance observable in the election of the successor to Symmachus, was the presence of the celebrated Cassiodorus, as Consul, and Deputy of Theodoric, empowered to give the sanction of a heretic King to this most important transaction of the Roman Church! The new Pope, Hormisdas, was, however, an active promoter of orthodox interests, charitable towards the poor, and severe towards heretics. He condemned certain monks for sustaining the offensive proposition: *One of the Holy Trinity suffered*; and the most ancient privileges accorded by the Roman See to the monastic bodies of the West, are said to date from this pontificate (514-23). Hormisdas also sent three legations to Constantinople in the object of restoring ecclesiastical union between that City and the Holy See; and again do we find the Papacy, in the person of the same Pontiff, condemning books (those by one Faustus upon questions of Grace and Free Will); ordering general reforms among the Clergy, and vigorously effecting the expulsion from Rome of the Manichaeans, the most unpopular and immoral of all sects.

Magnificent offerings found their way into the City's lately devastated sanctuaries in the time of Hormisdas; and probably all trace of Gothic and Vandal pillage had disappeared from the holy places before this century was at end. The convert King of the Franks, Clovis, sent a jewelled crown of gold, and a golden paten 20 lbs in weight. Ilderik king of the Vandals, another convert, having renounced the national Arianism, sent from Africa gold and silver sacramental vessels, and a volume of the Gospels in golden jewelled binding. Even the heretical Theodoric contributed his quota in a silver architrave, or cornice (weight 1400 lbs), and silver candelabra for St. Peter's. Among the acts of the next Pope, John, was the restoration or enlargement of several catacombs, particularly those of SS. Nereus and Achilleus—whence is inferrible

the continued frequenting of such subterraneans for devotional purposes.

A singular proceeding was the mission with which this Pope, called St. John I, elected 523, was charged by Theodoric, to obtain from the Emperor Justinus the restitution to the Arians of the churches taken from them at Constantinople; and because of his failure in which object, that Pontiff was thrown into prison at Ravenna, where he languished out the rest of his days—honoured by the church, on account of those sufferings, as a martyr: but this story of tyrannic wrong conveys significant evidence in the mere fact of a Pope having undertaken so inappropriate an embassy at the behest of a Heretic King, leading us to infer how utterly was wanted, to the then successors of St. Peter, even the sentiment of that secular dignity enjoyed, or that august power wielded by them in later ages. It should be remembered, indeed, for the honour of this ill-used Pontiff, that there are grounds for supposing he exerted himself to influence the Emperor for objects directly the reverse of those he had been charged to promote, or at least confined himself to counselling some modification alone of the laws against the Arians.

Anastasius describes the honours of his reception at Constantinople—the Clergy and citizens meeting him, with crosses and torches, at the distance of twelve miles from the gates; the Emperor kneeling at his feet; universal jubilee manifest around his progress—details that evince how, even thus early, the wrangling and ever schismatically-inclined Greeks had learnt to revere the religious superiority of Rome, and own, perhaps half-unconsciously, the claims of her Pontiffs. This was the first instance of a visit to the new by the ecclesiastical head of the ancient metropolis; and by the desire of Justinus now ensued an act, later invested with such high political importance, the coronation of an Emperor (also the first) by Papal hands. The successor of the martyred John I, Felix IV, was imposed upon the Romans (526) by Theodoric, but very unwillingly accepted — a not (according to the



*Art de vérifier les dates*) till after the Senate and Clergy had vigorously resisted the demands made » by that King.

Agapitus (535) distinguished himself by his bold opposition to the pride of Justinian, who urged him to communicate with Anthimus, a patriarch of Constantinople condemned as heretical; to the threats used by that Prince, he replied: « I thought I was speaking with a Catholic Emperor, but now perceive that I have to do with another Diocletian ». Justinian eventually yielded: and in a Council, held in the Eastern metropolis, the Roman Pontiff was able to make such high assertion of his now supreme dignity as implied through pronouncing with his own lips the sentence of deposition against the chief Prelate in the Byzantine Church, the favourite and nominee of an Emperor—or, rather that of the Empress Theodora. Agapitus having died at Constantinople, his successor, Sylvester. (536), was appointed by another interposition of a Gothic King, Theodatus; but that favour of the Arian proved fatal to its unfortunate object, who, during the siege of Rome by Vitiges, was calumniously accused, on evidence of letters forged in his name, as having encouraged the Romans to surrender to the Goths while the City was defended by Belisarius: which General took it upon himself to depose, and send him into exile (1). Vigilius was elected in his place by the same arbitrary interference; and though Justinian even-

(1) It is traditionary that the small church, *S. Maria in Trivio*, near the magnificent Trevi fountain, was built by Belisarius as expiation of his crime, in remorse either for this treatment of the Pope, or for the pillage after the taking of Naples. Though quite modernized in 1573, it still exhibits on its front the inscription to this effect, formerly in the interior:

Haec vir patricius Vilisarius, urbis amicus,  
Ob culpae veniam condidit ecclesiam,  
Hanc hic circo pedem sacram qui ponis in aedem,  
Saepe precare Deum ut misereatur eum.  
Ianua haec est templi Domino defensa potenti.

tually ordered the recall and re-establishment of Sylverius on the Papal throne, the intriguing Empress contrived to thwart the accomplishment of that just act, and drew down still more cruel wrongs on the innocent Pontiff, who was now a second time banished to the island of Palmaria, where he died, probably of hunger, two years after his inauspicious elevation. During his disastrous pontificate the principal event of local history was that siege of Rome by Vitiges, so graphically described by Procopius. The progress of the Greek conquests under the Generals of Justinian had aroused the Goths to a concentrated effort; and after defeat sustained by the latter under the walls of Perugia, their King put himself at the head of the forces which marched against Rome, A. D. 537, not less than 150,000 strong, if we may credit the report of the contemporary historian. The assailants formed their lines from seven camps, directing their attacks especially against the northern walls between the Flaminian and Salarian gates. Vigorous, and in the event successful, was the defence conducted by Belisarius, whose head quarters were at that *domus Pinciana* (supposed on or near the site of the present *Trinità de' Monti church*) first mentioned in the letters of Cassiodorus, and deriving from some patrician family the name which eventually superseded that of *Collis Hortorum* for the pleasant hill now laid out in public gardens, the favourite resort of the modern Romans. In his preparations to meet this emergency, Belisarius caused the Honorian walls to be strengthened or repaired, wherever necessary; but the *Muro Torto*, which forms so singular a buttress against the declivities of the Pincian, and is described by Procopius as leaning out of the perpendicular, precisely in the same state more than 1300 years ago as at this day, — this wall, though obviously indefensible and unavailing against assault, was left untouched by the prudent General, rather than act counter to the popular superstition which opposed his intent to restore it, on the plea that the infallible protection of St. Peter was divinely secured to that point in the fortifications—an idea indeed

justified by the result, for the Goths, we are told by Procopius, never directed any assault against those leaning walls during the siege. The battering-ram and all other known instruments of such aggressive war were used by this enemy. The principal aqueducts were reduced to ruin; thus the supply of water being cut off, the mills for grinding corn could no longer be worked; and the *Thermae*, kept up hitherto in all their ancient magnificence, and perhaps not less the centre of entertainment than in the time of the *Caesars*, became in consequence unavailing for the purposes of the bath, and were for the most part (if not yet in every instance) deserted. Famine ensued; but more extreme sufferings were averted by the timely precaution of sending out of the City women, children, and all incapable of co-operating in the defence, to the migration of which helpless classes, whilst they sailed down the Tiber for Naples or Sicily, the Goths offered no resistance. The repeated sallies from the walls in almost every case resulted in the discomfiture of the enemy; and at last Vitiges, alarmed by the rumoured approach of powerful reinforcements by sea and land, made the first proposals of truce, speedily followed by the raising of a siege continued from March 537 till March 538, memorable for the resistance of a small garrison (but 5 or 6000 men) against a *Leaguering* army of about 150,000 — disastrous to the interests of art through the destruction of irreplaceable master-pieces, statues and friezes by *Praxiteles* and *Lysippus*, thrown down (and by Greeks!) as mere missiles of war in the defence of the fortified Mausoleum of *Hadrian*.

Vitiges had been immediately induced to make terms with *Belisarius* by that report of the strong reinforcements, from Constantinople, said to be approaching by sea and land; and convoys of provisions in the event arrived, but with only an insignificant contingent of troops. The Goth, not abandoning his system of aggressive warfare, now marched upon Rimini, besieged and took it; placed garrisons in *Orvieto*, *Chiusi*, *Urbino*, and other towns; invited the *Frances* to

descend the Alps, the Persians to attack the Oriental frontiers; in compliance with which summons to northern allies, 40,000 Burgundians, led by Uraja, the nephew of Vitiges, entered Italy, joined by the Goths in their first vigorous effort, attended with the most complete and cruelly abused success, the siege of Milan, then the most populous and flourishing city of the West, whose bishop had injudiciously endeavoured to excite revolt against the Gothic authorities, and gone to Rome to obtain Belisarius's support in this object. Terrible and disgraceful were the consequences: after the citizens had endured extremities of famine, the two Greek commandants capitulated on the sole condition that *their own* lives should be saved; *all* the male inhabitants (Procopius makes the number, probably with exaggeration, 300,000) were slain, not even children excepted; *all* the females were reduced to slavery; in the churches priests were massacred upon the very altars; and the city was left a heap of ruins, as nearly as possible annihilated!

The ecclesiastical revolution at Rome, brought about by Belisarius, was one among many examples of the wrong and humiliation suffered by the Papacy under Byzantine despotism. Of Sylverius we know little; but one act recorded to his honour is his reprobation of the pillage and massacre by the Greeks at the capture of Naples, and it is said their General was thereby induced to return for the endeavour to give new life to the desolate city. But the offence for which this pontiff lost rank and liberty, was his refusal to recognise the schismatic (or heretic) Anthimus, who had been lawfully deposed from the see of Constantinople, and whom the ever-intriguing Empress Theodora was bent on reinstating: his answer on which subject to the imperial lady is a model of epistolary laconism: « *Domina Augusta*, never can I do such a thing as to call back a heretic condemned in his iniquity! » But the accusation now officially made against this doomed victim, was that he had sought to persuade the Romans to capitulate in the siege. From the church of S. Sabina,



where he had taken refuge, he was led to the Pincian Palace, and there upbraided by Antonina, the haughty and worthless wife of Belisarius. who received him reclining on a couch, whilst her submissive husband sat at her feet, and the other clerics brought with Sylverius were left waiting between the inner and outer veils (1). After listening to accusations of treason, he was then and there stripped of his pontific vestments, clothed in the habit of a monk, thus shown in derision to the people, and immediately sent into his long exile, first to Pateras, a city of Lycia, finally to the island of Palmaria, where he died either of starvation, or by the hand of an assassin hired by Antonina. The next day Belisarius convoked all the Roman Clergy, and commanded them to elect Vigilius (537), who now became Pope, giving the first evil example of elevation to that office through simoniac means, having purchased the imperial favour and that of Antonina by the promised bribe of 200 lbs of gold, the pledge to communicate with a heretic bishop of Alexandria, and to condemn the Council of Chalcedon. Muratori questions the report of a solemn anathema having been launched by the exiled Pope against the usurper; as also that of the abdication of the latter, touched by revisitings of conscience; but it seems certain that, after the death of Sylverius (537), Vigilius was re-elected with concurrence of all the Roman Clergy; and that thenceforth he seemed animated by a new spirit of zeal for truth and justice, as if the *legitimate* conferring of such high office brought with it certain mysterious virtues, even in the case of one hitherto unworthy. Belisarius left Rome for the brief interval of peace and security she had to enjoy after that long siege; and, marching northwards, quickly became master of Ancona, Osimo, Fiesole; at last (after greater effort) of Ravenna, which he had the humanity to provision

(1) A detail of ancient manners — curtains being then in use, instead of doors, to veil the entrances of palaces, like the *portiere* still common in Italian churches.

before entering after the capitulation. He had feigned to accept, but eventually refused, the crown of Italy offered him by the Gothic chiefs even while Vitiges was still maintaining the defensive in that city. The women of Ravenna reviled their husbands when they saw what a puny force were those now entering to occupy the Gothic capital ; but the inhabitants had nothing to suffer ; only Vitiges was made prisoner, to be sent to Constantinople, and there finish his days in captivity ; while the royal palace, untouched since the time of Theodoric, was ransacked of all its treasures, that Justinian might become their possessor. Belisarius being soon afterwards recalled, in order to undertake the Persian war, Italy was consigned to the authority of eleven Greek dukes, who now divided her cities under military government, feeble against the Goths, oppressive and exacting towards the Italians. One of their ministers obtained the cognomen, « the scissors », from his skill in clipping coin before it passed into circulation. The Gothic race were still possessed of Verona, Pavia, and probably the whole Ligurian province, then comprising the entire north-western coast. Their leaders had made repeated instance to Belisarius, but in vain, to induce him to become king of the country he might thus have forever detached from the Greek Empire ; and their policy was now to elect in rapid succession three native princes, two of whom being cut off by violent death, the third, Baduilla, — known in History as Totila, or « the Victorious » — survived to enjoy a more long and illustrious reign. This new king at once resumed the hereditary task of aggression ; marched from Verona at the head of but 5,000 men ; met and discomfited the Greek dukes at Faenza ; took the principal cities of Emilia, and traversed Tuscany on his way to Naples, of which he became master after a long siege, there using his victory with the most humane moderation ; though ordering the walls to be levelled, he allowed no wrong to the inhabitants, but took care to have them provided with food, first in small, then in larger quantities, thus to save them from the danger of excess after privation.

The Byzantine government now charged Belisarius to command another campaign in Italy, but, with inconceivable littleness, required him to equip the expedition at his own cost! and the first Greek General of the age had never, during this war, more than 8000 soldiers under his orders. Totila presently appeared within sight of Rome; where, on his approach, was taken by the Greek commandant within its walls the step (characteristic of that ever-theologizing government) of expelling all the Arian priests there found—as if to propitiate Heaven by the efforts of bigotry! Belisarius, who had fortified himself first, with quite insufficient means, at Ravenna, sailed thence to Durazzo; and having obtained some reinforcement, afforded what aid was within his power to Rome by sending as many as he could spare to garrison the castle of Porto, near the Tiber's mouth; but all soon fell into an ambush, and were put to the sword. Totila now became master of Tivoli, aided by treason from within its walls; and several were slaughtered, including the bishop, on the taking of that town. Having encamped on the heights near (those olive-clothed slopes at present so fascinating to the tourist and artist), Totila thence addressed an appeal to the Romans, reminding them of all they had suffered under Greek misrule, of the cruel wrong inflicted on their pontiff (singularly urged by an Arian invader against an orthodox Emperor!), promising peace and pardon on condition of an amicable reception within their gates. And this foe gave practical proof of his humanity; sparing the defenceless, protecting woman from violence, and sending back to their husbands, without ransom, the wives of Senators made captive at the siege of the castle of Cuma. Early in the year 545, he returned, after having taken Osimo but abandoned his unsuccessful effort against Perugia, to direct these more important operations. The Romans were now without their pontiff; for Vigilius, (little to his credit at such a crisis) had escaped to Sicily, where he indeed endeavoured to be of assistance. An energetic Deacon, Pelagius, seems to have been the most esteemed and conspicuous among

the clergy at their post ; and him the citizens now delegated to treat with Totila for an armistice of however brief duration. He was honourably received ; but anticipated in his pleadings with the intimation that three requests could not be even listened to : — the extending of favour to the Sicilians, the sparing of the Roman walls (chief impediment to the open contest with his foes desired by the Goth) ; and the restitution of the captives , who now served among his troops. The beleaguered City was at this emergency without any leader of high abilities to conduct the defence. Belisarius was at a distance ; and the Greek dukes who had been entreated to give their aid , answered by vain promises , but had the baseness to remain inert whilst the ancient capital was on the verge of ruin. Famine began to rage with all its horrors among the miserable people, and those who had means contrived to escape by purchasing (1) from Greek officials the licence to emigrate , but numbers died upon the road , or on the vessels they had embarked in , from the exhaustion of hunger. A vigorous effort made by Belisarius to bring succour in boats, one of which he himself mounted , after sailing up the Mediterranean from Otranto , was thwarted through the defeat sustained by his troops on the sea-shore , which induced him , under the idea that the sole place of retreat now held by his forces near Rome , the castle of Porto , had fallen into the hands of the foe , to abandon his attempt after he had already burnt down one of two towers , raised by Totila , guarding a bridge of beams that had been thrown across the Tiber.

Night hung over the doomed City when , at the centre still most ennobled by her classic monuments and memories , an incident occurred that strikingly shows how the Paganism of feeling had survived , even till this day, the official suppression of the ancient worship. That celebrated temple of Janus ( nothing more , in fact , than a bronze aedicula with portals on both sides ) still rose overlooking the Forum , near the Arch of Severus , on the Capitoline hill , its form grouping to-



gether with the lofty arcades of the Tabularium, the Corinthian peristyle of Saturn's Temple, and the Ionic colonnade of that of Vespasian, neither as yet in ruin, and both still beautiful in the wreck of their magnificence. Amidst the panic and agitation of the public mind, there were those who now thought of having recourse to the forgotten god, and reopening the fane where his two-faced image still stood, remembering the Heathen practice that required it to be shut in peace only, always open during war; but the bronze gates, grown rusty, could not be made to move on their hinges; and thus was the furtive attempt thwarted. Its obscure authors might have seen, beyond the arch of Titus, the arcade stories of the Flavian Amphitheatre, then perhaps lit by the full moon, that gives the most appropriate illumination to its warm-tinted masses of stupendous architecture, solemnizing and softening. The splendid temple of Venus and Rome still rose in its completeness, as did the Julian and Constantinian Basilicas, in sight from the Capitoline slope; only one Christian church (that over the fane of the Penates) was then visible from this spot; but the record of a condemned worship was impressively evident in those deserted and long-closed sanctuaries; the associations of the arena stained with martyrs' blood added to the solemn lessons of the scene; and one might have thought that *here*, above all other places, the most frivolous mind would have been fortified against the danger of relapse, even in thought, to the fallen superstition.

It was through the treason of the Isaurian Guard that Rome was at last given up to the invader; and those foreign sentinels having admitted a few Goths by the Ostian gate, assisted them in breaking open the valves so that the whole army presently passed in, on the night of the 17th of December, 546; and Totila ordered the trumpets to sound for that whole night, not only to announce the great event, but in the humane object of warning the citizens to take refuge in churches, which were, and remained, inviolate. That

leader himself at once repaired to St. Peter's, to worship at the shrine, and was there met by Pelagius, nobly representing the benign and heroic character of the priesthood, with the Gospel in his hands, and the words on his lips: *Tuis parce, domine!* — « Spare, my lord, those now your subjects ». Nor was the appeal in vain, for Totila forbade every act of outrage; though pillage indeed took place; some buildings were fired in the Transtiberine quarter; and in the first flush of victory sixty of the populace, twenty-six of the Greek soldiers were slain. The widow of the illustrious Boetius, who had reduced herself to extreme poverty by her charities during the siege, was protected from the fury roused against her by the known fact of her causing a statue of Theodoric, her husband's murderer, to be overthrown. In order to render another defence of the City more difficult, Totila commanded the demolition of the Honorian walls in about one-third of their extent, from the Nomentan to the Asinarian gate, east and southward; and it is said (but seems inconsistent with his conduct in other respects), that he intended the destruction of all the great public edifices—no doubt excepting the churches; being only withheld from this by a letter of Belisarius, who wrote from the castle of Porto, representing the infamy that would thereby ensue to his reputation (1); and thus had the Greek the merit of averting a disaster that would have cast its cloud over the whole future of Rome. Intelligence of a defeat suffered by the Goths in Lucania induced their King soon to lead his forces into that province; but before quitting he resolved on a measure that reduced Rome to the extreme of desolation: led away all the Senators as hostages, and compelled the entire population to migrate

(1) Procopius states this intention distinctly: *Ædificia quoque pulcherrima ac magnificentissima delere flammis parabat, et mutare Romam in gregum pascua*; and the letter of Belisarius, given in the sequel, reads like an authentic document somewhat amplified (l. III, c. 22). Totila's subsequent purpose was to make Rome the capital of the Gothic kingdom.

into Campania, the modern *terra di lavoro*; thus causing a catastrophe that strikes with awe—the absolute desolation of « the Niobe of Nations », now left for forty days an untenanted solitude abandoned to the serpent and the wolf; not even the sanctities of Religion remaining, no holy bell to summon (1), no incense to rise or taper to burn at her altars, to remind of what once had been. Some writers indeed state (Cantù, *Storia* ec.) that when Belisarius entered, after those forty days, « scarce 500 inhabitants » were found within her ruined walls; but the words of Procopius imply utter abandonment: *nec Roma quemquam morari passus, urbem reliquit penitus vacuum*. We may infer, indeed, that it could not have been a very large population the total removal of which proved possible, old age, infancy, and infirmity included, at the brief notice and in the hurried manner probable. After that interval of desolation Belisarius entered with a small force of Greeks and immediately set about the hurried restoration of the walls, in that barbaric masonry still distinguishable along their south-eastern extent—to the present time a monument of these extraordinary vicissitudes; the repairs being effected by the labour of the soldiers in twenty-five days. For want of other material, marbles and stones, hewn or unhewn, were hastily pieced together without cement, propped up by palisades on the outer side. The Goths had carried away the valves and woodwork of all the gates: and no carpenters being at hand to replace them, recourse

(1) The use of bells in church was known in this, though not generally adopted till the VIII century, from which period dates the observance of *baptizing* and blessing them. In the life of St. Columban, deceased 599 (Mabillon, *Annal. S. Benedict.*), we read that he and his monks used to be awakened by a bell, about midnight, for the devotions they joined in at that hour. The origin of the practice has been erroneously ascribed to St. Paulinus of Nola, who says not a word of bells or belfries in his minute description of his cathedral; but that mistaken notion has suggested the Italian term « campana », from Campania, the province where Nola is situated.

was had to the expedient of filling the open spaces with *chevaux-de-frise* — a military invention thus shown to be of higher antiquity than once assumed. Still do those rudely-constructed walls attest the tumultuous haste with which they were built; but festoons of bright flowers and creeping weeds veil their surface, giving beauty, in the year's genial seasons, to the now useless structure. That restoration was scarce complete, and the citizens were just beginning to return from exile, when Totila reappeared, after an absence of only 25 days, during which he had re-subjected the southern provinces, leaving to the Greeks the sole city of Otranto. On three successive days did the Goths renew the attack, but were in each instance repulsed, many being left dead in the moat formed by Belisarius on occasion of the previous defence against Vitiges (1). It was not till after the recall of that Greek general by the Emperor that Totila again became master of Rome; and again through the aid of treason, the City being given up by the same perfidious Isaurian Guard, who on this occasion opened the Ostian gate to the besiegers, while a Greek garrison, not more than 400 strong, still held the fortified mausoleum. Totila, in this second occupation, did his utmost to conciliate the citizens; recalled those still in exile in Campania; invited several Gothic families to settle in Rome; and (appreciating the temper of this populace) ordered equestrian games for their amusement, remembering,

(1) That moat may still be recognised in the hollow below the walls between the closed gateways Asinaria and Metronia, where a picturesque solitude is overlooked by the round towers and dusky bastions. Flaminio Vacea mentions that, in his time, many sarcophagi, marble or granite, (*multas urnas sepulchrales*) were dug up in the fields near the Porta Praenestina (S. Lorenzo), supposed to be those of the slain at one or other of the Gothic sieges in this century. Various war-machines were set on the walls near that gateway; and when the Goths brought up their wooden towers, drawn by oxen, for the assault, Belisarius ordered the archers to shoot at both men and animals (Gori, *Porta e Basilica di S. Lorenzo*).



perhaps, the *panem et Circenses*, or at least the principle involved in that maxim. The scanty garrison, compelled by stress of hunger, soon capitulated on condition of life being spared; and the same merciful treatment was extended towards those troops and to about 400 others who had taken refuge in churches. Instead of demolishing, Totila now restored public edifices; and around the Mole of Hadrian were raised outworks, perhaps like those that enclose it within bastions at the present day. Anastasius says that Totila now abode with the Romans like a father among his children. The Goths remained in pacific mastery till the year 552, when the Greek government renewed the war for the reconquest of Italy with redoubled energies. Narses, the newly-appointed General, a man of talent, without education, but in a feeble diminutive frame retaining, though now almost an octogenarian, the spirit of heroic youth, won decisive victory over the Goths, led by their King, in the passes of the Apennine between Matelica and Gubbio—as Cluverius determines the site of this battle, in which Totila received the wound he died of shortly afterwards—and thus closed a life which might have taught the bigoted Greeks that practical religion and humanity may co-exist with whatever dogmatic errors, that the unorthodox may be true Christians. Having taken Perugia, Spoleto, and Narni, Narses marched upon Rome; and, after a vigorous resistance from the force entrenched within those new bastions around the mausoleum, that general entered in triumph at the head of a heterogeneous army gathered together from various nationalities; the unresisting garrison being allowed to escape with life. In the following year the last King of the Ostrogothic dynasty, Teja, was slain, after gallantly fighting, on the slope of Vesuvius; and all his army surrendered; the Goths now for the most part leaving Italy; the few who remained content to exchange the sword for the plough or spade. Narses had already taken their royal standards and the main treasure of their kings at the castle of Cuma, that fortress on a classic and poetically-illustrated site.

which was several times besieged during these years. Thus A. D. 553, was the long Greek and Gothic war brought to its term. Comparing the conditions, under Goths and Greeks, of this much-tried land —

— the lost and won ,  
The fair but fatal soil, that doth appear  
Too narrow still for each contending son

— (in the words thus rendered from Manzoni) we find how little she gained in any diminution of suffering, any exemption from wrong by alternate change of masters. An Italian historian says: — « The devastating incursions of Huns and Vandals, in the V and VI centuries, could scarce be compared with what Italy had to suffer from the rapacity and spoliations of the Greek captains under Justinian : during the eighteen years that this war continued they persisted with insatiable cupidity and incessant diligence to amass treasures of gold , silver, jewels, vases , statues, whatever valuable articles could be seized. Though discordant among themselves, these leaders were united in one object, vying with each other who should enrich himself most amply and speedily by the spoils of miserable Italy » ( Denina , *Rivoluzioni d'Italia* ).

Narses continued the task of restoring Rome , not only her fortifications—but (it appears) many of her public buildings. With exception of the Milvian bridge , all the others in the neighbourhood had been cut off by Totila on his retreat; and at this day the picturesque Salarian, Nomentan, Lucano , and Mammolo bridges, over the Anio , are monuments of the exertions of Narses and of an eventful epoch ; as also are other public works of this period : the gateways rebuilt by Belisarius, the Pinciana ( once called after him , *Porta Belisaria* ), Latina, and Ostiense, or at least the *outer* structure of that double gateway now known as *Porta S. Paolo* ; and the Greek Cross, or holy monogram, on these buildings, attests the religious sentiment which prevailingly announces itself, however inconsistent the political morals or character dominant, in the

annals of Byzantine Empire. An outwardly manifest piety, whatever its worth, appears marked in the conduct of the two Greek Generals, both so conspicuous in this epoch's story. Belisarius edified the Romans by his devotion and respect for relics; and a large gold cross, with a record of his victories inscribed on it, was offered by him, in thanks-giving for those successes, to St. Peter's shrine. Narses is said to have trusted in prayers rather than in arms; and was reported to have seen, before a battle, a vision of the Blessed Virgin, who enjoined him to expect from *her* the signal for the moment of attack! In reference to which was it that Paul V had this General's figure introduced among the *frascaes* of the Borghese chapel at St. Maria Maggiore, with the inscription: *Narsetem Virgo docet quomodo Totilam vincens Italiam liberet a Gothis.*

In the same memorable year, 553, almost the whole of this land was over-run by other invaders, the Alamanni, half-naked savages and Heathens, who made war in a manner the most atrocious: but after they had devastated provinces to a point as far southern as Apulia, were in their main body cut down by the Greeks under Narses; and, soon afterwards, in the residue destroyed by some strange pestilence with symptoms of raging frenzy, interpreted by public opinion as a judgment for their many sacrilegious outrages. The sufferings of the people, during these long years of calamity, were such as may be supposed. In the province of Picenum alone 50,000 peasants died of famine in one season. At Rome a father and his five sons threw themselves together into the Tiber, to escape the pangs of hunger during the siege. Several instances of cannibalism became known, the worst at Rimini, near to which town two women kept an inn, where the travellers who spent the night were murdered by them for the purpose of feeding on their flesh.

A new form of government was now inaugurated in Italy, the Exarchate; this country becoming one of eighteen compartments of the Empire so designated from the time of Justinian. Rome was again reduced to subordinate rank; Ra-

venna being the seat of the viceregal authority first conferred on Narses (550), who held also the offices of Grand Chamberlain and Patrician — the latter now a mere honorary title; often conferred by Theodoric, and sometimes borne by the princes deemed barbarians. In 554, Justinian, acting (as is said) by the advice of Pope Vigilius, issued a Pragmatica for the reordering of Italian administration — but by which, says Balbo, « nothing was put into order » — its twenty clauses confirming the acts of Theodoric, placing the provinces under the government of Prefects, (who invariably *purchased* office at the imperial court); the cities under Counts, with control over magistrates and military; but in all causes final appeal to Constantinople being allowed; farthermore, extending to the Roman Pontiff and Senate the right of inspection over weights and measures — insignificant indeed, but, in regard to the former, a symptom of the political importance now beginning to be ascribed to his high office. It was once reproached to one of those Greek Prefects in Sardinia that he had sanctioned sacrifice to idols within his district, to which he made the frankly expressed answer: « My employ costs me so dear that, even by this expedient, I cannot make my accounts square! » Not too severe, we many conclude, was the censure implied in St. Gregory's remark: « The iniquity of the Greeks exceeds the sword of the barbarians! » After fifteen years Narses was recalled (565) from his Italian government by Justinus, or rather by his empress, another of those intriguing women, like Theodora, who domineered at Constantinople. It seems a gratuitous calumny against such a man that imputed to him the revenge of inviting the Longobards to the invasion which ensued, and with which opens another epoch of calamities for Italy, in 568.

The higher attributes of the Papacy seem in abeyance, and its vocation but ill corresponded to at this epoch by a Pontiff who could remain voluntarily absent from his flock during one of the most tremendous visitations from which Christian Rome ever suffered. Vigilius indeed exerted himself



to succour the besieged City from his retreat, and sent many ship-loads of grain from some Sicilian port, which were all intercepted by the Goths before the vessels could reach the Tiber. Soon afterwards his presence was required by Justinian at Constantinople for the decision of the controversy of the « three chapters » (1), in reference to the question of the two Natures in CHRIST, decided in the sense deemed heretical by those who become founders of a widely spread body of Oriental Christians, still known as « Jacobites ». Vigilius has been accused of inconsistency, of self-contradiction in this affair — but vindicated; and certainly did not want the courage to provoke imperial displeasure that led to his imprisonment, besides (according to Anastasius) other cruel insults suffered during his stay at Constantinople, — details however rejected by Muratori, who maintains that, on the contrary, he was received with all due honour at the Greek court.

The colouring given to the story of this pontificate by the older chronicler is indeed totally different from what modern writers admit; but this is not the place to enter into the special grounds for such discrepancies. According to Anastasius, Vigilius was violently removed from Rome by command of Theodora, seized when in act of distributing alms at the church of St. Cecilia on that Saint's festival, and embarked in an open boat on the Tiber to be carried away to Constantinople; the people first followed and asked his blessing, responding thereto with « amen »; but when they saw him depart, threw stones and potsherds at him as he descended the river, crying out: « Thy famine and thy plague be with thee! thou hast done evil to the Romans; mayst thou find evil wherever thou goest! » And farther, he tells how, when this Pope arrived at the eastern capital, he was first received with honour; the Emperor embracing him with tears;

(1) Properly speaking, in the theologic acceptation of *κεφαλαια*, the « three headings », or chief points, in as many books by three Greek controversialists, impugned for their monophysite principles.

the people raising jubilant voices, as he passed to St. Sophia, with the words: *Ecce advenit dominator dominus!* But after a time the scene changed; Vigilius, on his reproaching the Emperor for his controversial stubbornness, was struck in the face by Justinian; when he took refuge in a church was dragged from the altar, and, by desire of Theodora, led about the streets, with a rope round his neck, till evening; then thrown into a dungeon and kept on bread and water; the other clerics, who were his companions from Rome, being sent to work in the copper-mines; which persecution continued till Narses interposed, on the request of the Italian Clergy, to procure the release of all, and the honourable restoration of the pontiff to his see. Improbabilities are apparent in much of this narrative, which, indeed presents excuse for the conduct of Vigilius in one point, showing him to have been in prison at Constantinople during the siege by Totila. Singular it is that Anastasius represents two Popes, Vigilius and Pelagius, as successively accused, quite without evidence indeed, of their predecessors' death; but his own story can scarcely be deemed less than slanderous towards Justinian. The good deacon Pelagius, who had fed the hungry and protected the weak during the siege, became his successor (355), and, notwithstanding his proved merits, met with such opposition that, of all the Italian Clergy, only two bishops and one priest would take part in his consecration, owing to his being accused of heterodox tergiversation with regard to the long-disputed « three chapters ». He wrote several letters to vindicate himself, among others that to Childebert, King of the Franks, where are read the remarkable words (so opposed to theories now in favour respecting the temporal rights of the Papacy): « We are obliged to be careful in avoiding scandalous suspicions, and to make declaration of our faith to kings, who ought be respected by us, and to whom the sacred Scriptures oblige us to submit » (*Art de vérifier les Dates*). His enemies went so far as to accuse this virtuous man of having conspired against the life of Vigilius (who

died at Syracuse on his return from the East); and in order to exculpate himself, he adopted an expedient that strikingly shows the rising ascendancy of the Roman Pontificate above all other ranks in the Church. Acting on the counsel of, and accompanied by, Narses, he went first to the extramural St. Pancrace basilica, thence to St. Peter's, with a procession chanting litanies, and in the latter church mounted the ambon, with the Gospel in his hand, and the cross supported on his head, thus to make solemn oath of self-acquittal in presence of the Clergy and people. *S. Pancrazio*, founded in this century, has been entirely modernized, but still stands picturesquely, with its convent and tower, amidst the olive-plantations and shady lanes on the Janiculan Hill. Its choice for the first scene in this singular exculpatory rite can only be explained by reference to the idea now popular, as evident in legends, that that Martyr was the special avenger against perjury — *valdè in perjuriis ultor*, according to Gregory of Tours. Pelagius was enabled to replace all the precious vessels and pallia (embroidered hangings) removed from churches during the troublous days he had seen. After his death the Greek Emperors asserted the right, as the Gothic kings had previously, of confirming every election before a new Pope could be consecrated; and hence the prolonged vacancies of the See henceforth—in the first subsequent instance for four, in the next for nearly eleven months. John III (560) was one of the Popes occupied in restoring and embellishing churches. We have to regret the loss of all the artworks, that might have enabled to appreciate this period's schools, both in mosaic and painting, ordered by him for the basilica now known as *SS. XII Apostoli*, completed under his, though begun under the preceding pontificate, and originally dedicate to SS. Philip and James—at present retaining no trace of its olden character. Benedict I (574) won the gratitude of the Romans by procuring supplies of grain from the Emperor to provision the City whilst its environs were over-run by the Longobards; and the public miseries caused

by these new invaders so affected this benevolent man that his life sunk under the sorrow felt for his people. Pelagius II was both elected and consecrated, 578, without the now requisite imperial sanction, owing to the sad conditions of the City girt round by foes—the fifth siege of Rome in this century. It was this Pope's fate to occupy the throne during a period of continuous and terrible public calamities, which he thus depicts in a letter, written 583, to his nuncio at Constantinople with the object of procuring aid from the Emperor against the Longobardic invasion: « Appeal, and exert yourself for the sake of obtaining aid as speedily as possible, that you may come back bringing assistance to us; seeing that the Republic is here reduced to such sore distress that we must be given up to ruin unless God move the heart of the most pious Emperor to exercise his innate compassion towards his subjects, and deign to appoint for us a General (*Magister militum*), as well as a Duke to govern these dominions, the Roman territory, which seems absolutely denuded of all garrisons; for the Exarch writes to us that he can in no way render aid, showing that he wants means sufficient for the defence of his own territories. May God therefore inspire him (the Emperor) to interpose amidst these our great perils, before the army of that most godless nation succeed in taking possession of those places still held by the Republic ». This letter (in which we notice two political meanings—that the Exarch had yet no direct dominion over the Roman province, and that the Pope was far indeed from imagining any right of his own to govern the City or State he classically styles « Republic ») was addressed by Pelagius to one who became his illustrious successor, the monk Gregory, whom he had recently taken out of his cloister, well aware of the virtues and talents distinguishing this holy man, in order to appoint him first one of the seven Cardinal Deacons, afterwards *Apocrisarius*, (representative, or Nuncio) to the Greek Court. In the now prominent story of the great monastic order lately founded, and whose chief centre had become that



of St. Benedict's community on Mount Cassino, we have to notice the destruction, in 580, of that celebrated sanctuary, burnt down by the Longobard invaders under their leader, the Duke of Beneventum; and, in consequence, the first establishment of those monks at Rome, where the fugitives from the Cassinese cloisters were now received with honour by Pelagius, on their arrival, bringing the autograph rule of their saintly Founder; and allowed an asylum at the Lateran, henceforth for 440 years (whilst the Monte Cassino cloisters lay in ruin) the principal seat of their illustrious Order—at what precise spot here located, near the Papal palace, cannot be determined. Among the public works of Pelagius II was the rebuilding of the *S. Lorenzo* Basilica; where the shrine of that martyr was encased in silver through the munificence, not incompatible with copious charities exercised by this Pope, who converted his own house into a hospital for aged poor. He died of the pestilence, which had passed from the East into Europe, and began to desolate this Continent, some years previously.

Two ecclesiastical events, within the period of his pontificate, claim attention. In 589 the Visigoths, now occupying Spain, formally renounced the Arian heresy to embrace Catholic Christianity, as published by act of a Synod, at which their already-converted King, Riccaredus, was present. In a Synod at Constantinople was passed a decree by the Patriarch proclaiming the See of that eastern capital *supreme*; but not without the promptly-roused opposition of Rome, where Pelagius at once condemned and revoked the acts of that assemblage—but in what sense such affected supremacy was denied at Rome we shall subsequently see.

An event of some significance, falling within this period, is the extinction, though not yet final, of that proud Institution associated with so many glories of ancient Rome, the Consulate, the succession to which ceased in the 13th year of Justinian (641), in consequence of reforms adopted by that Emperor perhaps from motives of economy; the inaugurating

festivals of a new Consulate being attended with expenses which Gibbon estimates at 80,000 pounds sterling; and among the invariable spectacles, — first reduced from a greater number to only seven, — horse and chariot-races, athletic performances, pantomimes, hunting of wild beasts, &c. were considered indispensable to public entertainment. when Justinian himself was created Consul during his father's life-time, in 521, he won popularity by his liberal expenditure for spectacles in which were brought on the amphitheatric arena 20 lions and 30 pards, beside a multitude of other animals; and although Christian civilisation no longer tolerated the gladiatorial massacres, the exposure (if not inevitable sacrifice) of human life was still a common popular amusement in the combats of men with wild beasts—the reprobation of which practice does honour to the humanity of an Arian and Gothic Prince, in this more enlightened than some orthodox contemporaries (see the Epistle of Theodoric to the Consul Maximus, Cassiodorus, Var. lib. I, epist. 42). Successive Emperors, after this period, assumed the office of Consul for the first year of their respective reigns; and the date *post Consulatum*, henceforth occurring on epigraphs, merely serves to indicate the number of years from each accession to the Byzantine throne. Three centuries, however, elapsed from the death of Justinian before this already obsolete dignity was for ever abolished by the Emperor Leo, « the philosopher ».

Before turning away from the study of this epoch, we have to consider, in one interesting range of Roman antiquities, the proof that that class of records confined to her Catacombs do not exclusively refer to a depressed and persecuted, but also to a triumphant Church. We read in Anastasius that the Popes John III and Pelagius II added to, or embellished, those primitive cemeteries: the former « loved and restored » (such the historian's words) those sepulchres of the Martyrs; the latter constructed (fecit) the Catacombs of St. Hermes. As to John III, we are told that he ordered a regular supply of lights, bread and wine for the eucharistic

celebration at the altars of those subterraneans, every Sunday, from the Lateran Basilica. That the same Pope actually *lived* for some time in the Catacombs of SS. Tiburtius and Valerian, and there consecrated several bishops, is another statement of Anastasius, not borne out by modern writers, nor apparently consistent with the then circumstances of the Church and her chief Pastors at Rome.

As to literary culture at this disastrous epoch, we can scarce even expect the proofs of aught save decline and inertness: but it is interesting to associate the noble ruins of Trajan's Forum with the story of Intellect and the honours paid her, even amidst depression and eclipse, through means of the public declamations of classic poetry for which that site was still the favourite arena—see the *Carmen* of Venantius Fortunatus:

Vix modo tam nitido pomposa poemata cultu  
 Audit Trajano Roma veneranda foro;  
 Quod si tale decus recitasses auri senatus,  
 Stravissent plantis aurea fila tuis (4).

We have another record of the literary movement of Rome, in this age, supplied by the writings and experiences of the poet Arator, a Subdeacon and « Excomes », who produced two books of hexameter verse on the story of the Apostles (*Historiæ Apostolicæ*), the first dedicated to the honours of St. Peter, the second to those of St. Paul.

And in anticipation of the *accademie*, so fashionable in more modern Italian life, so conducive to fostering the spirit of coterie and satisfying with petty triumphs, were given public readings of this poem by the author — it is

(4) « Scarcely does venerable Rome hear even in the Forum of Trajan magnificent poems finished in style so elaborate; and hadst thou recited such a composition in the hearing of the Senate, they would have strewn golden carpets before thy feet ».

said, actually seven times within the one year, 544 — at St. Peter in Vinculis, under sanction of the Pope, and before applauding audiences. Arator, a Roman of patrician birth, was made Cardinal Subdeacon by Vigilius, and Poet Laureat also, according to Ciaconius, who describes him as a Benedictine monk. His dedication to that Pope is an authoritative voice from an eye-witness telling of Rome's sufferings at that day:

Moenibus undisonis bellorum incendia cernens,  
Pars ego tunc populi tela paventis eram.

An increasing distinctness in the idea of St. Peter's supremacy is apparent in his poem: the Apostle is, to him, the Prince of the Church: « Petrus in Ecclesiae surrexit corpore princeps »—and yet his own argument in the sequel seems to place both St. Peter and St. Paul *alike* at the head of the Christian Institution in Rome, where both alike founded her religious edifice: « The people (the Roman) is consigned to the two leaders (*ducibus*) united by fraternal bonds in the same office — the honour of the City constrains the subject world to listen; and the crowns of Peter and Paul are worthy instruments for subduing the threats of Caesar, for extending the celestial laws in the citadel of tyranny, for winning the contest against the supreme tribunal » (lib. II). Arator, like Juvenecus in this respect, satisfies himself with adherence to the scriptural text; and attempts little more than a versification of the Apostolic « Acts »; without legendary ornament or amplification.

We may infer, seeing the climacteric importance allowed to the subject of St. Peter's chains, at the close of his first book, that the Poet had in his mind's eye that academic triumph at the church on the Esquiline, where the sacred Relic might have been exposed during his recital. And his idea of an absolute Palladium, for the perpetual safeguard of Rome, secured in the possession of that object (so essentially and *ab origine* Pagan) is the most curious evidence his compo-



sition contains of the novel tendencies now given to popular piety : « For all ages remains this supreme pledge , exalted to the magnitude of a star ; *that* which Peter made sacred by the touch of his body , the Angel by gazing on it ; and to thee , O Rome ! is faith confirmed and salvation perpetuated by these chains , encircled by whose links thou shalt be for ever free ; for in what can those bonds fail to be valid and serviceable which he touched who is able to absolve all ? invincible through whose hand , religious through whose triumph , thy walls shall never be shaken by any foe ; for he shall close the way to wars who opens the portals of the starry mansion ».

Aurelius Cassiodorus ( 470-562 ), a native of Calabria , engaged first in public life under Odoacer<sup>1</sup>, afterwards as state-secretary to Theodoric , has left in numerous writings a valuable record of the institutions , intellectual and social conditions of Italy in his time. The laws and public works of the Gothic kings , and the then circumstances of Rome , political and monumental , are best to be learnt from the pages of his *Variorum* , a collection of letters , rescripts ec. in twelve books , written under the royal name on almost all possible occasions in the range of ministerial affairs or public interests.

His other writings on the study of the Scriptures and of liberal arts ( Rhetoric , Logic , Geometry , Music ) interest inasmuch as they reflect the ideas of the age ; but in style Cassiodorus affords an example of the worst , tedious , inflated , obscure , pedantic ; in this respect illustrating the story of hopeless decline in a literature alien from all just models. We are , however , compensated for the weariness of perusal by various passages lit up with the spirit of pure and earnest piety , and evincing a love of knowledge ardent , but well-tempered. The portraiture of the truly virtuous man and the speculations on the state of the soul after death , in his *De anima* ( c. 18 and 19 ), show how immense the progress in moral elevation from the point of view of Christian , as con-

trasted with that of Pagan Philosophy ; and the final chapter , which rises into a strain of prayer addressed to the Redeemer , breathes a devotion sublimely eloquent. Few more attractive pictures can be found of the monastic life and its pursuits than that given in his *Divini Lectionibus* ( c , 29 ) of the monastery of Vivariensis in Calabria , to which the writer withdrew after witnessing the overthrow of the Gothic throne he had so long faithfully served ; and in that retreat , dedicate to intellectual labour and devotion , without fanatical excess of austerities , we have the type of the higher purposes originally aimed at in the cloistral institution. Such sentiments as are expressed in a letter in the name of King Theodatus , addressed to Justinian , convey severe rebuke against much of the policy of that Emperor , and oblige us to credit Cassiodorus for ideas greatly beyond the enlightenment of his age : « Since the Deity has permitted that more than one religion should exist , we dare not take upon ourselves the task of prescribing any one in particular , remembering that we have read that man ought to serve God voluntarily , and not by command of those who use force » (4).

Severinus Boetius (470-524) , a Roman of illustrious birth , who so far won the confidence of Theodoric as to be nominated first Consul , then Patrician , and finally « Master of Offices » , merited enduring fame by writings handed down to public esteem through the Middle Ages. Almost the last representative of classic Latin literature , his « Consolation of Philosophy » was the source where thousands sought to be consoled in periods of intellectual dearth. Become an object of unjust suspicions to the King , accused of having invited the Greek Emperor to liberate Italy from the Gothic sway , he was imprisoned at Pavia , and a decree condemning him

(4) This deserves to be written in letters of gold : *Cum divinitus patiatur multas religiones esse , nos unam non audemus imponere. Retinemus enim legisse , voluntarie sacrificandum esse domino , non cuiusquam cogentis imperio.*

to deprivation and death was signed by the Senate; in expectation of which final doom he wrote his « *De Consolatione* », five books of essays, or meditations, interspersed with lyric poetry; also a treatise on the Trinity, and another entitled « *De Disciplina Scholarium* ». A memorable monument of the age's genius and style is the first of these works, in its moral reflections reminding of Seneca rather than any other classic author, but lit by a holier flame, inspired from loftier sources than the Stoic Philosophy; for, while quite remote from the domain of theology, its conclusions are accordant with the Christian's hope and faith; and its resignation rests on the sense of God revealed below, on the trust in immortal rewards for virtue. It is indeed a noble and affecting picture, that here presented of a mind seeking refuge from the storms of fate and the hopeless gloom of a prison-house under prospect of violent death, in the highest spheres of speculation, the most sublime themes for thought, the most difficult problems that can be proposed for intellect to solve. And in the total absence of theologic discussion, which is yet compatible with an earnest religiousness, the distinctive feature of this work, there seems to be conveyed a protest against the polemical temper of the Church at this period—an assertion of the capacities of Intellect for grasping infinite truth, apart from the dictates now beginning to be authoritatively imposed as well by Emperors as Popes. In this respect the « *De Consolatione* » may be said to be the last utterance of intellectual as opposed to dogmatizing Christianity. The fate of its author leaves an indelible stain on the memory of Theodoric: tortured by a cord with which his head was bound till the eyes almost started out, he died either under the blows of a club or under the axe of the headsman; soon after his decease revered as a saintly Martyr, in respect to whose sufferings miracles were imagined in the spirit of that age: his biographer, Julius Martianus, telling us that it was believed at Pavia he had held his severed head in his hands, answered questions in such plight, walked to a church, and

there received the Eucharist, before he peacefully gave up the ghost—legends that at least prove how high the esteem for his virtues as well as talents.

The reiterated shocks, the ruin of public and private interests, the continual panic and distress to which the social body was now subjected, could not have failed to act upon the religious temper; and we see the traces of such impressions in a deepened gloom of imaginative superstition, in the confirmed disposition to rely on human mediators, to appeal to the Saints in Heaven for aid amidst calamities, to ascribe astounding miracles to their relics or agency. Depression and melancholy perhaps predispose to a worship whose objects are near the level of our own infirmities, and more within the compass of our apprehension than is the Infinite. Yet such impulses as « first by fear awoke the charmed soul », may have availed in many minds to confirm the devotional principle, to strengthen, if not to enlighten, faith; nor is it assuming too much to conclude that the tremendous disasters attending this transition-stage between the fall of an ancient and the rise of a modern world, served to consolidate the social basis of Christianity. Amidst these public trials was it that an Institution new to the West had its rise, and received much of its influence for good, the Monastic System, henceforth becoming ever more influential.

Wild and wonderful, in some instances terrific are the legends of this age; demonology, visions of the infernal state, the intervention of avenging Powers, began more than ever to occupy fear-struck minds; and the Dialogues of St. Gregory I, with the writings of his namesake, the Bishop of Tours, supply the reflection of what was now passing in that inner world. Two mental visits to the invisible life (anticipative of Dante), one that of a holy hermit who saw the « Inferno », were reported in the years 532 and 591 (see Baronius).

Theodoric, who had begun to reign on principles of enlightened tolerance, ended as a persecutor, suspicious, cruel,



and tortured by remorse on his deathbed; having shortly before (526) given orders that all their churches should be taken from the Catholics and given to his Arian subjects, who had already their cathedral, besides many other places of worship at Ravenna. That edict was never carried out, owing to the death of its author; and popular feding soon took its own vengeance on the heretical king, by circulating the story that his ghost had been seen by a hermit in act of being chased up the side and thrown into the crater of Vesuvius by those of his two victims, Boetius and the Senator Symmachus, father-in-law to that well-known writer. Troya mentions the belief that a mysterious statue, which stood on the Sicilian coast opposite Reggio, had power to ward off the fires of Etna with one foot, and with the other to drive away barbarian invaders from that island! In this century the legend of the Seven Sleepers, translated from the Syriac, found its way to popularity over western countries, — a striking apologue, that may have sprung from the amazed impression in the popular mind at the rapidly-transmuting effects of Christianity: during the Decian persecution seven Christian brothers fled for refuge to a mountain near Ephesus, and took shelter in a cavern at night; awakening, and seeing it was day, they agreed that one should venture into the city to buy food; the brother chosen for this went back to Ephesus, and was astonished to behold a cross over its gateway; entering, he found all things changed, and symbols of Christianity met his sight in streets new to him; having made a purchase, he offered money of the reign of Decius, which, together with his strange appearance, excited suspicion; he was arrested, taxed with the possessing of secret treasures, and brought before the bishop; but that milder judge soon recognised his innocence, and learnt from him his strange story; with the magistrates and clergy the good Prelate accompanied him back to the cavern, where were found the rest, ready to confirm the fact; and all the seven, after being blessed by the bishop, calmly gave up the ghost

together, while thanks were being offered to God for this miracle of a sleep that had lasted near two centuries, from the reign of Decius to that of Theodosius! The church of SS. Cosmo and Damian at Rome was the scene of another miracle sometimes treated—a very curious subject—in art, but only in the Tuscan school, as Mrs. Jameson assures. Those holy brothers, of Cilicia, had learnt and practised medicine from pure motives of charity, never to receive payment, and suffered martyrdom under Diocletian. A man afflicted with cancer in the leg went to that church on the Forum to pray for healing through their aid; presently falling asleep, he saw the two Saints, who, standing above him, consulted on his case, and finally resolved not only to amputate, but to give him another leg from the body of a Moor just buried at *S. Pietro in Vinculis*: the operation was performed and the limb replaced while the patient slept; he awoke finding himself sound and free from pain, but with one leg *black*; after he had told all to his friends, they resolved to test the story by opening the Moor's tomb, and there was found the body, with a white leg instead of the one wanting, for so had even the corpse been respected by those Saints! The legend curiously illustrated in its several details by the mediæval frescoes on the portico of *S. Lorenzo*, betrays itself by its own anachronisms to be of later date than the persons who are actors in its story; and is more in the spirit of this than the previous age. The empress Eudoxia was possessed of a Demon, learning which, her father, Theodosius II, desired she should be brought to Constantinople, hoping for a miraculous cure by touch of the relics of St. Stephen. But the Demon at Rome declared, through Eudoxia's mouth, that he would not be cast out unless the Protomartyr came himself for that purpose. The Emperor, ready to conform to this troublesome demand, obtained sanction from his Clergy and people to exchange the body of St. Stephen for that of St. Laurence, and wrote to Pope Pelagius with this request, soon granted by the latter after consultation with his Cardinals (Pelagius I was

the contemporary of Justinian; in the time of Theodosius II, Sixtus III and Leo I were on the Papal throne). The body was brought with due honours to Rome, where it was the intent to enshrine it in the then new church, St. Peter in Vinculis; but on arriving near, the bearers could not enter, and the Demon cried out that it was the will of Stephen to lie beside his brother Laurence. Consequently, the precious burden was carried to the extramural basilica, where the Demon was cast out so soon as Eudoxia touched the body; which being lowered into the sepulchre, St. Laurence obligingly made room for it by moving to one side. The Greeks then proceeded to remove the latter from his place; but on touching him, all fell down as dead, and so remained till, at the hour of Vespers, they were restored through the prayers of the Pope, the Clergy, and Roman people; notwithstanding which, all these rash men died, in good earnest, within ten days; and all the Latins who had consented to the transfer were seized with frenzy, nor could be cured till the bodies of the two Martyrs lay quietly side by side. The legend does not tell us whether the Pope himself, mainly responsible, alike suffered from this chastisement, so singularly expressing the ideas of the age as to Divine judgments and the sins provoking it! In the pages of St. Gregory of Tours we see what a glorifying sanctity was ascribed to shrines and holy places: what wondrous virtues to relics, or even things that had touched them. He tells us (*de Gloria Martyrum*) that after the Adriatic had long been terrible to mariners owing to frequent shipwreck, the Frankish queen, Radegunda, threw into its waters a Nail of the Crucifixion, and that subsequently this sea became calm, one of the safest to navigate; in consequence did pious sailors thenceforth fast and pray before embarking on it, singing psalms when they went on board. A presentiment of the Crusades speaks in the ideas now centering round the holy places at Jerusalem; where, it was said, a light issued from the Sepulchre illumining the land; unwithering plants grew around the Column of scourging; and

water brought from that tomb, was used for baking cakes to be given to the sick; thongs that had girt that pillar, were also efficacious against disease. There is a kind of lyric enthusiasm in this book on the Martyrs' glory; and I translate the following, earliest account of the Virgin's Assumption, already alluded to: « When the blessed Mary had finished the course of her life, and was to be called away from this existence, all the Apostles from different regions assembled at her dwelling. Having heard that she was to be removed from this world, they watched together with her; and behold! the Lord JESUS came with his Angels to receive her soul, consigning it to the Angel Michael, and then departing. In the morning the Apostles carried away her body on her bed, and laid it in a tomb, where they guarded it, awaiting the advent of the Lord. And behold! the Lord again stood before them, and commanded the sacred body should be borne on high in clouds and carried into Paradise—and now her soul was reunited with it, exulting among His elect, with whom she enjoys the eternal bliss that knows no end ».

From this period dates the custom of swearing upon relics, as, later, upon the Gospels; also the compliment and reward bestowed by the Popes upon those highly-deserving, in the gift of filings from St. Peter's Chains, set in golden keys. In the development of Ritual the most important circumstance is the henceforth daily celebration of Mass, adopted universally in all dioceses, as in this century at Rome; and we learn from St. Gregory's Dialogues that the faithful were still allowed to carry with them on journeys the consecrated species for Communion. At Baptism, which was still by immersion, it now became the Latin usage to lower the body but once, instead of thrice, into the water; the Greeks retaining till the VIII century the triple immersion. It seems that Ordinations by the Popes were, at least till the time of John III, held occasionally in Catacombs; and a picture in the cemetery of St. Hermes (v. Martigny) evidently represents that rite. In the Church's devotions the sublime



*Te Deum* is henceforth heard to swell forth at the chanted nocturnal office in choir. In her symbolism it is evident that the Cross, but not yet the Crucifix, was now on all occasions conspicuous, often of gold studded with gems, as seen in mosaics at Ravenna. And the crozier now appears inlaid with gold, instead of being a simple wooden staff, usually of cypress, as hitherto; later entirely of metal or ivory with elaborate ornament—though (as above observed) this symbol is not yet seen in the old mosaic groups, where the dress of the Clergy is simply white with the stole, or the pallium, on which are small crosses, to distinguish Prelates; the long cross and sacred book in the hands of Deacons. It appears indeed that no colour in ecclesiastical vestments, though sometimes a slight bordering of gold or purple, was admitted till the IX century. In the interesting story of Christian Charities the Foundling Asylum from this period takes its place, superseding that provision for exposed infants which the Church had hitherto left to private benevolence, imposing indeed on those capable the duty to take charge of such, and careful that in no case should the destitute child be neglected. The Empress Theodora, who has left a memory so far from honoured, had the merit of being the first to found a Magdalene Asylum (1).

(1) In the year 529 were opened public schools at Rome for Grammar, Rhetoric, and Law; and in 533 the Gothic king ordered a subvention from the State for their support. Parochial schools, for the studies of the priesthood, were open even in these troubled times throughout Italy.

Jornandes, *De Rebus Get.*; Procopius, *De Bello Got.*; Nibby, « Roma Antica e Moderna » (where the Gothic Sieges are well described); Venantius Fortunatus, (Bishop of Poitiers); sacred Poems, among others the *Vexilla Regis*; Cornelius Maximianus, Poems, *Nugae Maximianae*; Ciaconius, *Vitae Pontif.*, Gregorovius, « Geschichte der Stadt Rom. »; Leggende del secolo XIV (Florence, 1853), a good compilation referring to different ages of the Church.

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## CHRONOLOGY OF MONUMENTS.

ROME : SS. Martin and Sylvester (rebuilt in the IX century, modernized 1650) about 500 ; St. Pancrace, 500-'14 (modernized) ; SS. Cosmo and Damian, 526-'30 ; extramural Basilica of St. Laurence, originally built by Constantine, renewed 432-'40, rebuilt, in portion now forming choir, with mosaics, 578-'90 ; SS. Philip and James, modernized 1702, now SS. *Apostoli*, 555-60.

RAVENNA : St. Martin, the Arian Cathedral, now *S. Apollinare Nuovo* ; Arian Baptistery, now *S. Maria in Cosmedin* ; St. Theodore, now *S. Spirito* ; Mausoleum of Theodoric (*Santa Maria Rotonda*) — between 500-526 ; Basilica of St. Vitalis, 534, consecrated 547 ; Basilica of St. Apollinaris in Classe, 545, consecrated 549 ; St. Michael, now desecrated (mosaics sold) 545 ; Mosaics of *S. Apollinare Nuovo*, about 570.

PAVIA : Cathedral founded by Longobards, rebuilt 1488.

MONZA : Basilica of St. John Baptist, founded by Theodolinda, 590, completed by Como architects, 595 — originally a Greek Cross, with Byzantine features, but altered and enlarged in XIV century.

VERONA : Oratory adjoining cloisters of St. Zeno, in which that saint was entombed, rebuilt as *S. Benedetto* in VIII century, still retaining details of VI century.

PISTOIA : Cathedral, originally dedicate to SS. Martin and Rufinus ; façade, XII century.

SPOLETO : Church of St. Julian on Monte Luco, founded by the hermit St. Isaac, about 528.

(1) Pag. 227. By the Hebrew letter *Tau* it was usual to distinguish in official lists the names of soldiers among the living after battles ; as by the Greek *Theta* (for *Θαυματος*) were distinguished those among the dead—see Perseus :

*Et potis nigrum vitio prefigere Theta.*

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## VIII.

### Origin of the Monastic Orders.

THE origin of Monachism is referred by Helyot to the Christian solitaries, known as *Therapeuts*, who settled, at a primitive period, on the shores of the lake Mareotis; but the individual founders of the eremite and coenobite life were St. Paul and St. Antony of Egypt, who both retired into the desert of the Thebaid about the middle of the third century, and there held that intercourse so picturesquely described by St. Jerome (Life of Paul the First Hermit). In Rome the monastic observance, without confinement to the cloister, is said to have been introduced by St. Athanasius and other priests from Alexandria, about A. D. 340. St. Jerome states that his venerable friend, Marcella, a noble Roman matron, was the first female of her class who there embraced the life led by St. Antony and St. Pachomius in the monasteries of the Thebaid, as taught to the faithful at Rome by « Pope Athanasius », and by the priests with him who had fled from Arian persecutors to the ancient capital. And the lady to whom he writes this, Principia, adopted the same life, residing together with the widowed Marcella at a suburban villa; the example having been followed, before St. Jerome wrote, in many monasteries of virgins, and by an innumerable multitude of monks (*monachorum innumerabilis multitudo*). St. Augustine (*de Moribus Eccles. Cath.* l. I) declares his admiration of the example set by several communities he had seen at Rome and Milan, dedicated to a life of labour, prayer, and

asceticism, the males under direction of a presbyter, all supporting themselves by the work of their hands, the females by spinning or weaving; none compelled to any special austerities, nor bound by any vows, but reconciling freedom with sanctity, independance with self-denial — *Christiana caritate, sanctitate et libertate viventibus*. It is said that St. Martin of Tours founded the first monastery in the West, near Poitiers, about A. D. 354; and an interesting account of the community collected around him is given in his life by Sulpicius Severus. Even after becoming a bishop he used to inhabit a cell beside his cathedral, and, for some period, a monastery two miles distant, where eighty followers inhabited what seems to have been a village rather than a cloister, each apart in a wooden cottage or a rock-hewn recess; and when St. Martin died, in 400, almost 2000 monks followed his funeral. The monks of those times were not ecclesiastics, being dedicate to a calling deemed distinct from the social duties of the priesthood, though the superior of each community was, it seems, in orders. St. Jerome, who launches into poetic praises of the religious life in solitude (« O wilderness blooming with the flowers of Christ! O desert rejoicing in the more familiar communion with Deity! »), but who has drawn the most striking picture of the terrible dangers that beset it, commends the monastic home as the fittest seminary to prepare for the priesthood, through studies and the ordeal of self-humiliation. Generally indeed the reports in ancient writers as to those primitive efforts to conform to a high ideal of Christian life, are touching, beautiful, and morally refreshing to contemplate. We must admire the practical wisdom of those who, in their fervent piety, would not admit any elements of danger or spirit of fanaticism; knew no irrevocable vows, no unlimited control from superiors; acknowledged the respectability of labour, and never became mendicants under the pretext of religion.

We do indeed find the hazardous example, it seems not rarely followed in these ages, of dedicating females, by the



vicarious vows of parents, to this exceptional life ; as in the case, mentioned by the biographer of St. Martin, of a Prefect in Gaul who thus devoted his daughter « to God and to perpetual virginity », after her cure from fever through the mere touch of a letter written by that Saint ! But it is evident that otherwise consecrated females, even till the VI century, were at liberty to quit that state, and to marry. St. Gregory tells, with much simplicity, of his three aunts who thus became dedicate, living together under a rule in their own house ; two of whom were cut off by blissful death ; but one, tired of solitude, returned into the world and became a wife—forgetful, as the Saint laments, not of her *vow*, but her consecration (*oblita consecrationis*). Several monasteries had arisen in Italy before the time of St. Benedict, and from their communities had been elected prelates distinguished in the Roman, as in other principal Sees. The regular community-life of ecclesiastics was first introduced in the West, about 350, by St. Eusebius, Bishop of Vercelli, who induced the clergy of his See to adopt such observance as regular Canons in association under a rule. The rule of St. Basil, followed by all the Greek monasteries, was introduced into Rome in 550 ; but that of St. Benedict attained such unprecedented success and ascendancy, that all other systems of Monachism in the West became eventually absorbed in this, the great norma of cloistral institution. About the year 649 considerable accession to the monastic ranks in Italy was caused by the Monothelite persecution in the East ; and again, in the VIII century, by a second exodus from the relentless sectarianism of the Iconoclasts, then ascendant at Constantinople. The regular cloistral life was not definitively prescribed for female Orders in Rome till the XIII century, when St. Dominic prevailed on the nuns, hitherto more at liberty, to submit to this stricter observance. But, with whatever modifications for the one sex, the development of the monastic system in Rome, after its first importation from the East, was rapid. At the end of the VI century 3000 nuns were settled in this City, all maintained by

that great and good Pontiff, Gregory I. In the time of Charlemagne were 44 monasteries; and in the X century, 40 churches belonging to monks, 20 to nuns at this centre.

The rule of St. Basil was in many features taken from that of St. Pachomius, a Patriarch of the Egyptian cenobites, and aimed at the union of study and devotion with manual labour, by which those recluses supported themselves and procured means for charity to others; it also admitted what was afterwards adopted by St. Benedict, the receiving of children to be educated in the cloisters, till of age to choose for themselves a final state of life. These Monks held conferences, to discuss questions of ethics or doctrine, as the followers of Pachomius also kept up such intellectual palestrae every day. As to the date when monastic vows originated, it is asserted by Polidoro Virgilio that St. Basil, about the year 373, was first to require, after twelvemonths' probation, the triple engagement to chastity, poverty, and obedience (*De Rerum Invent.* lib. VII, c. 2). About 367, this Saint sent his brother to Rome, to assure Pope Damasus that the doctrine of his followers was orthodox, as their lives were blameless. Many accepting the rule drawn up by that Greek Father, his Order began to extend rapidly over the regions of Latin Christianity, so that by the XI century it had attained great prominence in the West, and the Neapolitan states alone contained, at one period, 500 Basilian monasteries; that of Messina being an establishment on which 40 others were dependent. At Otranto, in the XIV century, the Basilians had a school where the Greek language, with other branches of knowledge then commonly cultivated, might be studied by the youth, for lay or ecclesiastical careers, without distinction; and this Order then served several churches at Rome, among others the *Sancta Sanctorum* of the Lateran.

The regular Clergy, who, as first constituted by Eusebius of Vercelli, had formed a kind of episcopal senate, in communities residing near their Cathedrals, began, from the X century, to abandon that simpler and disciplined life, de-

siring more personal freedom with equal distribution of the diocesan revenues. *Canon* was the term originally applied to all the servers of churches, from highest to lowest, down to bellmen and grave diggers; and the primitive distribution to all of shares of food and clothing, something like the modern barrack system, was called *liberata* or *sportula* (because viands were thus given in baskets), from which former term derives our « livery ». Several Prelates endeavoured to restore the community-life of the regular Canons, but only with partial success; and at last ensued a division between the Secular cathedral-clergy and those properly called Canons Regular, as at the present day, the former living like the parochial clergy, though bound to assist at offices in choir, the latter leading the community-life under a rule attributed to St. Augustine, though variously modified by founders of separate congregations. It is assumed by St. Thomas Aquinas that the regular Canons received their rule from the Apostles, who dedicated themselves, after the Ascension, to similar observance; others refer its origin to Pope Urban I; and Panvinio (continuator of Platina) asserts that Gelasius I, about 495, first placed the Regular Canons of St. Augustine at the Lateran Basilica. That Doctor of the Latin Church has indeed, though the actual rule is no longer ascribed to him by critical historians, from time immemorial passed as founder of this Order; and in some Latin verses inscribed round the Library of St. Alban's Abbey, was thus made to speak for himself:

Per me lata prius stat normaque canonicatus.

(Dugdale, *Monasticon*).

Theodoret (*Vitae Patr.*) speaks of the immense number of monasteries, in both East and West, more or less noted in the V century. Several owed their origin to St. Basil, in Pontus and Cappadocia; others to St. Augustine, in Africa; others to St. Ambrose, at Milan. One *coenobium* in the East con-

tained, at that period, no fewer than 250 religious females : and St. Ambrose tells that many women came from different Italian cities, even from Mauritania, to be consecrated as nuns by him. Mabillon gives a full and interesting picture of the monastic institutions anterior to the time of St. Benedict. Many were those homes of pious brotherhoods in Italian provinces before the recluse of Subiaco had yet been heard of : there was the convent for nuns at the St. Agnes basilica, said to have been founded by a daughter of Constantine ; that of Marcella, probably on the *ager Veranus*, near the St. Laurence basilica ; there was the monastery founded at St. Peter's by St. Leo I ; that near Naples, in the former villa of Lucullus, by St. Severinus ; that of St. Felix at Nola, where St. Paulinus had his retreat near his basilica ; that founded by St. Honoratus, who there presided over more than 200 monks, at Fundae (Fondi) in Campania ; others in Etruria, whose superior was St. Hilary ; and one in the solemn pine-forest of Ravenna, whose walls the sea-waves dashed against. As to the life led at such retreats, Cassianus tells us the rules were almost as numerous as the buildings, or even as their cells ; but in Italy it was the Basilian that most communities followed. And the monastery of those times was not situated, nor considered in its proper place, within the city, but, as became the home of solitaries (implied in its name), amidst the lonely passes of the Apennine, in the wooded glen, or on the seaward mountain. Nor was it like the buildings of later time, raised so as to form an architectonic unity, but a mere cluster of cottages, gathered round the church in the midst. From, or after, the V century, however, a change came over the scene : the monastery, after by degrees approaching nearer, at last rose amidst the streets of cities ; and eventually the monks and nuns became a considerable element in the civic population. We may conclude that those early monasteries, by their pious example and large charities, contributed much to the cause of religion, and kept alive some light of learning in the most calamitous times ; but that none



in Europe had been pre-eminent seems inferrible from their speedy disappearance, or absorption, when a more completely organized system had begun to occupy the field. St Benedict conferred benefits on Christendom not only by fixing the aims and defining the duties of his followers in the worthiest direction; but by causing, though not indeed immediately, the extinction of a class of indolent, unclean fanatics, who dwelt like wild beasts in horrid solitudes, supported by others' labour, and doing mischief in so far as they excited ignorant admiration for a caricature of the Christian life.

The Jeronymite Hermits, long scattered over Italy and Spain before they united as regular societies in the XIV century, formed the lowly origin to what became, especially in Spain, one of the most splendid and conspicuous monastic bodies, adopting the rule of the Augustinians, but considering St. Jerome as their model and Patron Saint; supporting themselves originally by the labour of their hands, and at the same time dispensing largely in their charities. It was not till the XVI century that perpetual vows were taken in this Order, as required of its members by Pius V.

The life of St. Benedict may have been idealized by legends, but in its leading details is beyond doubt as historic as it is morally beautiful. Born at Norcia in the Spoleto province, 480, of patrician parents, he was in childhood brought to Rome for his studies; but even at that tender age was so revolted by the profligate manners of those around him, that he fled from that degenerate City, when but fourteen years old, to a remote village about forty miles distant, near Sublacum (Subiaco) on the Anio, followed by his nurse, a faithful creature who did all she could to serve him: there the peasants gave him for residence a cottage (or cell) beside their church; and a pleasing idyl might be worked up from this episode of the Saint's sojourn, with the good woman who prepared his meals, among the villagers; but soon, desiring, in the devout spirit of the times, to forego every social comfort, he retired to a cavern high up in a mountain gorge above the

Anio, assisted in his new mode of life by a hermit, Romanus, who inhabited another cave near, and who daily supplied him with a loaf, his sole food. There he passed three years in profoundest solitude and continual devotion; after which period he was persuaded to accept the office of superior to a convent at Vicovaro, near Tivoli. But the unworthy monks who had elected him, ill-suffering the discipline he tried to enforce, gave him poison in a cup of wine, which was shivered to pieces when he blessed it! After a mild rebuke, he immediately left them to return to his cavern, where he was now supplied with food by the peasants, and joined by numerous disciples. Here, among the mountains, he founded twelve monasteries, in each of which dwelt twelve monks; but he was at last induced to quit Subiaco, being harrassed by a jealous priest of a neighbouring church, who attempted to poison him in a loaf, and sent immodest women to tempt his followers in their solitude. Thence setting out with one companion, Benedict reached Casinum, near what afterwards became the Neapolitan frontier, and there chose his final settlement on the mountain where stood a temple and grove in which, strange to say, was still kept up the worship of Apollo, though the town had long been seat of a Bishopric. Benedict converted the idolaters, destroyed the fane and its altar, broke the idol to pieces, and cut down the grove, in place of which he raised two chapels dedicated to St. Martin and St. John Baptist; in time also the monastery, which, after many vicissitudes, expanded into the magnificent mother-establishment of his Order, Monte Cassino.

Here, in 529, was assembled the community adopting the regular mode of life prescribed by Benedict. And the rule now drawn up by him evinces his capacities to legislate, his knowledge of human nature: it prescribes continual occupation; manual labour for seven hours daily, in the fields for agricultural, in copying books for intellectual objects, besides reading and the instruction of youth; children being received into these cloisters for their studies, and consid-

ered thenceforth dedicate to the religious life. The noviciate of one year now became indispensable before religious profession; and the usual vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, were afterwards taken, though not originally (as Padre Tosti assures) *solemn*, i. e. of perpetual engagement, as they were made to be eventually (1). All applicants were received, high and low, freemen and slaves. without regard to worldly position; nor were any set apart for mere servile duties (like the *conversi* of later systems), for all the brethren took in turn the task of serving each other. Another feature remarkably distinct from what we see in later monastic developments, was that this community in much the greater part consisted of laymen, only the few most approved by their Abbot being admitted to the offices of priest or deacon; and the Mass was not a daily celebration, but on Sundays and festivals alone, when all used to communicate. No very severe austerities entered into the prescriptions of this rule; and hospitality to all strangers was enjoined among essential duties.

When Totila was on his march to Naples, he visited the Patriarch of the new Order at Monte Cassino; and was addressed by him in the prophetic admonition: « Thou hast done, and still doest, much evil. Forebear henceforth from iniquity. Thou shalt cross the sea; shalt enter into Rome; shalt reign for nine years, and in the tenth year shalt die ». All these things came to pass; and perhaps the clemency shown by the the Gothic King on the capture of Naples, was mainly due to the impression made upon him by St. Benedict; perhaps also might be referred to the some source the remarkable fact that, during the siege of Rome, the then alike

(1) The words of Mabillon indeed imply that they were so from the first, and that in this respect Benedict was first to introduce the principle therein involved: *Primus antiquorum sanctus Benedictus discipulos suos uni regulæ suæ sollemni voto adstrinxit* (Annales Ord. S. Bened. l. III, 36).

extramural basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul were scrupulously respected, and the course of their sacred rites left undisturbed, by Totila's soldiery.

One day the Patriarch was seated at the gate of his monastery reading, when a Gothic captain rode up with a poor peasant, whose arms were tightly bound, and whom the soldier fiercely drove before him. « There (said the peasant) is father Benedict »; and the Goth insolently commanded him to give up the property of that man committed to his keeping, as the captive had said, hoping to procure respite from torture. The Saint made no answer, but calmly looked up from his book, fixing his eyes on both; before that gaze the peasant's bonds fell more fast than they could have been untied; before that gaze the soldier trembled, repented, and at last knelt on the ground, beseeching pardon from the aged Saint, who raised him up, admonished him to turn from evil and to use mercy; then gave him food and drink in the monastery, and dismissed him with a blessing. There are few scenes in hagiography more fraught with moral, or that suggest so fine a subject for the artist—the monastic buildings on the mountain, the Abbot seated outside with his scroll, the barbaric captain and the frightened peasant; and the serene glory of an Italian sunset above.

Before the death of the Founder, in 543, that religious body named after him had taken root in many distant countries; and the recluse of Subiaco lived to know himself the originator of one of the Christian institutions most amply expanded. Through Maurus and Placidus, his immediate disciples, it reached France and Sicily; others introduced it into Spain; and in less than two centuries all Monastic Orders in the West had become affiliated to it. Cassiodorus adopted this rule at the double monastery, for coenobites and eremites, he had founded on a mountain near Squillace, (Calabria), in 541; and in 563 arose one of the first Abbeys on record in England, founded by St. Columban, who had already created one of the first of the Irish monasteries in that sister isle—preceded



indeed, in order of time, by the Kildare cloisters, become illustrious, from 521, through the sanctity and miracles of St. Bridget. Charlemagne and Louis the First aimed to secure acceptance of the Benedictine rule in all monasteries of their Empire; and the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 802, decreed that it should be universally adopted. From the X century the Benedictines began to divide into various branches — Camaldulense, Celestines, Vallombrosans, Silvestrines, Cluny and Grammont congregations, who severally introduced modifications or distinctions. The monks of Cluny, founded 910, embraced the rule in the next century, under their Abbot St. Odillon (or Odo); the Camaldulense received it in 1020 from St. Romuald; the Cistercians, in 1098, from St. Robert; the Carthusians, in 1080, from St. Bruno; the Vallombrosans, in 1060, from St. John Gualberto; the Celestines, in 1294, from their founder Peter di Morona, the hermit who became Pope as Celestine V; the Olivetans, founded near Siena, adopted it in 1319; and other communities of less note became alike followers of St. Benedict. In England his rule passed from St. Peter's of Canterbury to all the other great monasteries; and the learned St. Bennet Biscop founded, 677, the Benedictine Abbeys at Wearmouth and Jarrow, perhaps the first built in stone, with glass windows, and adorned with sacred art-works, yet seen in that country. Lanfranc united all the English monasteries into one congregation, 1135, under more severe discipline, according to the primitive type. Restorations in similar spirit (called reforms) were effected at different epochs — as that, in 1621, of the French congregation of St. Maurus, so illustrious for its services to Literature.

Not only in the West, but in Asia also, and so early as the VII century, did this Order widely extend itself. Benedictine Monasteries rose in the valley of Jehosaphat, in Galilee, on the summits of Carmel, Sion and Tabor; and after Mohammedan invasion had driven the austere anchorites from Egypt, asylums of piety and study were again opened in the desert by Benedictines. In Iceland eight Monasteries, mostly

Benedictine, existed in the XIV century, and were the homes of several writers, who left, among works issued from those cloisters, a chronicle of Icelandic Bishops, and poems on sacred themes in that language. In the earlier years of the XV century the monasteries pertaining to this Order, throughout Europe, numbered 82,741; and 400,000 was the number of those canonized or beatified among inmates of their cloisters. In the XII century, so many were Benedictine among those elected to the Papacy that it seemed (says Mabillon) as if the Holy See had become hereditary in this Order! and as to its possessions, one of its own writers, about the year 1480, states that if each monastery had its due, the third part of all lands within Christendom should be the legal property of Benedictines.

From the VI to the IX century, Monte Cassino continued to be (with deduction of the period of suspense after the Longobard outrages) almost the sole seat for learning in Italy, the sole seminary where literary studies or science were maintained. At this and other Benedictine monasteries were compiled the earliest libraries, besides that of the Lateran due to Pope Hilary; collections formed by the assiduous labours of those dutiful monks to whom we owe the preservation of almost all that has reached us from the treasures of classic literature, and whose services in this respect were so commonly owned that «copyist» became a frequent synonyme, as Tiraboschi tells us, for monk. Early was undertaken, at several cloisters, the task of compiling those documents, codes, diplomas ec., which may be said to have become the nucleus of European History; and by the year 1092, Farfa, the celebrated Abbey founded by the Blessed Laurentius, Bishop of Sabina, 550, possessed three such completed record-books. The precious codes of the Monte Cassino library are now, in great part, at the Vatican. Mabillon claims gratitude for the services of Nuns also in the task of copying, executed in finest calligraphy by several among their sisterhoods; as in particular by those of St. Cesaria at Arles, who copied books

for their own use, and for sale, to spend the profits in charity.

« The monks (says Disraeli) provided those chronicles which have served for the ecclesiastical and civil histories of every European people. — In every Abbey the most able of its inmates, or the Abbot himself, was appointed to record every considerable transaction in the kingdom, and sometimes extended the view to foreign parts. All events were set down in a volume reserved for the purpose; and on the decease of every sovereign, these memorials were laid before the chapter, to have a sort of chronological history drawn out, occasionally with a random comment, as the humour of the scribe or the opinions of the whole monastery sanctioned ». All records of this description drawn up in Tuscan cloisters, have been collected, and are now classified in the admirably-arranged « Archivio » at Florence, where they are accessible to the studious.

*Qui laborat, orat*, is one of the golden maxims due to the monks; and among admirable features in the rule of St. Benedict is the marmer in which it lays down the principle of the dignity no less than duty of labour: « Idleness (the Saint writes) is the enemy of the soul; then only are they (the brethren) truly monks when they live by the labour of their own hands, as the Apostles used to do ». Such manual toils his community were engaged in for seven hours daily; and every day were spent at least two hours in reading, three during Lent, in which season they were required to read *all* the MS. codes their cloisters then possessed—a detail that realizes to us what the humble nucleus of the Cassinese Library, afterwards so famous, must have been. A century later, it became the practice to listen to reading whilst at the work of the hands; and daily to spend in study or tuition the interval between Nones and Vespers. As the Benedictine Order grew in wealth and intellectual eminence, it was natural that modifications should be introduced. In the Congregation of St. Maurus the manual labour was reduced to one hour

daily, besides the service of the refectory taken by each in turn. St. Isidore of Seville, like St. Augustine and other ancient fathers, — also St. Nilus in the X century, — continued to enjoin such labour as the indispensable duty of the monk. The Cistercians at first restored its stricter observance, and were not encouraged by their superiors to compose or transcribe books, though they might exercise artistic skill in the beautiful fantasies of illuminating or miniature on parchment; but, after a time, copying took the place of other manual employment at Cîteaux, their mother-convent. A well-known ecclesiastical historian, still living, says: « The cells of St. Benedict's monastery at Subiaco alone have perhaps thrown such light upon all sciences as might entitle them honourably to compete with both the British Universities of Oxford and Cambridge ». (Theiner. *Introduzione del Protestantismo in Italia*). And an English Protestant writer owns that « by Benedictines were laid or preserved the foundations of all the eminent schools of learning of modern Europe. » (Sir J. Stephen, *Essays*).

The supposition that children consigned to monastic guardianship were, in later years, at liberty to choose their path of life, is refuted by Muratori, who shows — that the so-called « Oblates », who were offered with a prescribed ceremony, the parent wrapping the hand of the boy, together with a petition, in the altar-cloth, never could quit the religious life. This usage and the rite, both more ancient than the time of St. Benedict, were by him adopted. Another dedication under passing influences also irrevocable, frequently occurred, when the dying or dangerously sick assumed the cowl, desiring to descend into the grave as member of some Religious Order (however in contradiction with past life), which pledge, in case of recovery, could not be recalled (1). But to

(1) A fine monument of the XIV century at S. *Francesco*, Ravenna, has the recumbent figure of Ostasio da Polenta (deceased 1386), lord of that city, and whom his epitaph styles « magnificus dominus », in the humble garb of a mendicant friar.



such pious rashness may be ascribed a share in producing elements that led to decline, and induced those corruptions lamented, in the IX century, by Paschasius Radbertus, Abbot of Corbey: « pene nulla est secularis actio quam non Sacer-  
« dotes Christi administrent — nulla rerum improbitas qua  
« se Monasticus Ordo non implicet ».

In the VII century the monasteries of Sicily rivalled those of Rome in the number of inmates, in the pursuit of literary studies, and in the extent of possessions: but almost all, in that island, were destroyed by the Saracenic invasion; and an affecting scene is described, at one of the few surviving till the Norman occupation, where, after a victory over the Moslems, those conquerers came unexpectedly upon the obscure cloisters in which they found the monks praying for their success, as yet ignorant that their country had been freed from the yoke of the Infidel.

The powers and dignities of Abbots and Abbesses in the Middle Ages were almost regal. In costume the former were distinguished by the mitre and other episcopal insignia from the X, though perhaps not universally before the XI century. Faculties for giving minor Orders to their monks were confirmed to them by the Council of Trent. The superior of Monte Cassino, as chief of the mother-establishment in the Benedictine Order, bore the title « Abbot of Abbots »; but these dignitaries were divided into three classes holding very different positions—namely, Abbots with spiritual and temporal jurisdiction, sometimes over large territories, towns, castles, villages; those who had no authority except over their several communities in the cloister; and those who had merely the abbatial rank and title without any spiritual government. The Abbots of La Trinità di Cava, near the shores of the Salerno gulf, held sway over districts containing more than 400 churches, some even in Rome, and to 320 of which were attached other monasteries; but the wealth of that great Benedictine centre, founded as a simple hermitage about 980, as a monastic edifice about 1025, had been reduced, even be-

fore the late change of government, from 82,000 to an average of 28,000 ducats per annum. In the IX century arose, first in the Frankish Empire, the abuse of bestowing abbacies *in commendam*, by royal letters patent, upon seculars, usually feudal lords, who assumed the title of « Count Abbots », and, as may be imagined, did their utmost to enslave and victimise the unfortunate monks; often contriving to render hereditary their possession in the first instance granted but for life.

The prerogatives of Abbesses were such that they might be called queens in spiritual government: often women of abilities, they received large tribute and obedience, extending authority over various monasteries, sometimes (though this was eventually condemned) over communities of both sexes, so that monks as well as nuns might be governed by a female! Powers were arrogated by some high-placed Lady Abbesses which the Church never could sanction or admit, as, in certain Spanish cloisters, the right to hear confessions and pronounce sacramental absolution over their subject nuns!

The story of charitable is identical with that of monastic institutions. For many ages the hospice of the cloister was the only inn where rich and poor, travellers and pilgrims, found shelter; the sole asylum, in rural districts at least, where the sick and infirm were ever received. At the Nonantola monastery, built about 752, near Modena, the saintly founder, Anselm, took care to provide an ample hospice and xenodochia for strangers and pilgrims, this Saint « being diligently occupied day and night in his cares for such, anxious that none should go away without refreshment » (*Rer. Ital. Script.* T. I, p. II). It was no doubt from regard to the indispensable usefulness of such establishments that Louis II, in 835, appointed commissaries to inspect all the cloisters and hospices in Italy, and report whether repairs were needed. Muratori gives, from an old code, the bill of fare for the pilgrim's meal at one of these cloistral hotels: « Scaphilum » (a certain measure) « grani, unde fiat panis coctus, et duo

« cangia vini , et duo cangia pulmentarii ex faba et panico  
« mixto bene spisso , et condito de uncto vel de oleo ».

But one of the greatest merits of the Religious Orders was their promotion , by precept and example , of the cause of emancipation from slavery. Not that they on principle condemned that institution from the first ; on the contrary, it is evident that for a long period the lands of most monasteries were cultivated by serfs , attached to the soil, who had passed into their property with the ground bestowed by liberal donors. It was rather by their humane practice that they so ameliorated the condition and recognised the rights of the serf as to prepare for his ultimate freedom , to which result the decrees of Councils, the exhortations of prelates , as well as the laws of beneficent princes concurred. The Church in respect to this, as to other great evils , accepted the conditions of society as she found them ; aimed at no organized assault or sudden subversion ; but perseveringly combated with moral weapons , holding up truth and justice in order to destroy error and wrong. The cultivators of the conventual , as well as other estates , were , indeed , engaged under the common yoke of serfdom—but the Poet correctly bids us—

Mark how gladly, through their own domains,  
The monks relax or break those iron chains.

( Wordsworth , Eccles. Sonnets , P. II , IV ).

Monastic lieges were divided into different classes , and stood in different relations to the Abbot ; sometimes feudal , with obligation of attending him on solemn occasions and taking arms to defend his possessions from aggressors. Many were attached as serfs to lands of these masters from whom they might receive freedom , finding , almost invariably , protectors during infirmity or sickness in their cowed superiors ; though some indeed remained hereditary bondsmen , and could only intermarry with families of like condition , leaving their children in the same state. It often happened that sufferers from

the misery entailed on multitudes by cruel wars and devastating invasion, gave themselves up voluntarily to serfdom, in return for protection and maintenance; these last were called *obnoxii*. Superior both to the infeodated serfs and above-named dependents, were the tributaries voluntarily attached to religious Establishments, compensating by payment for the protection they received. It was not so often in money as in kind, that this census was paid; and one form, in which certain liegemen made their simple offering, was that of wax for the altar; in which case they were called *cerocensuales*. All such dependents were liable to serfdom, if failing to discharge their debt for a long period—as, for instance, three years — though minors and the aged were often pardoned, sometimes indeed on the antecedent stipulation of leniency to those in embarrassment (4). The cloisters rose from the verdant lawn, or against the background of luxuriant woods, surrounded by orchards or vineyards, while the monks, in their white or black habits, Benedictine, Carthusian, or Cistercian, moved among multitudes of busy retainers, cheered and civilized under their superintendence. Well was it for the future interests of Europe that not in cities, but in wild solitudes were Monasteries, for the most part, founded, and that to manual more than to spiritual labour was dedicated the time of a majority among their inmates. Benedictines were the best of agriculturists, the best farmers and landlords. From some countries the culture of the vine disappeared

(4) It was natural, in times when slavery was the inevitable lot of multitudes, that many should prefer placing themselves in the dependence of regular rather than secular proprietors, because in the administration of property the religious communities ever followed a fixed principle, while the layman was guided by caprice. Among rural slaves a broad distinction existed between those bound to every species of service, and those who, residing on a particular estate, were pledged only to a certain labour, and a certain rent or tribute, — which last seems to have been generally the condition of the monastic dependents (Biot, *Abolition de l'Esclavage*).



with the suppressed Monasteries ; and to this day the choicest wines of Germany are produced from vineyards originally planted by monks ; the whole cultivation of that generous plant on the banks of the Rhine being directly or indirectly due to their initiative. It was in the agricultural and rural aspects that those institutions began, from the XI century, to assert social importance with the kindest and most far spreading agency ; and the different bodies into which the Benedictine Order was divided, may from that epoch be considered in the fulness of their admirable development, the beauty and vitality of their picturesque centres, become the focus of so many talents and influences.

For evoking before mental sight the whole pleasant picture of the mediaeval monastery, we have the requisite material at hand in an interesting document given by Mabillon (*Annal.* T. IV, l. LIII), from among the Vatican codes—a norma for all buildings and arrangements of such sacred premises, drawn up by a monk Johannes at Cluny, in, or shortly before, the year 1009, and brought from that great Cistercian centre, in the same year, to Farfa by Hugo, abbot of that Benedictine establishment. Not only all appropriations, but all measurements are here marked out for the builders' guidance, so that the record has its value from the architect's point of view : for the church, inner length 140 feet, that of nave 65, height 43 feet ; length of whole, comprising porticoes, atrium, 280 ; the interior lighted by 160 windows, two towers flanking the front ; — a plan in which we observe how large the space for assemblage of laics outside the portals, and how great the proportion of the choir (for the monks alone) compared with the nave. Sacristy, length 58 feet ; dormitory, 160 by 24, lighted by 97 windows ; hall for conference or recreation, 43 by 34 feet ; parlour for reception of visitors, length 30 feet ; refectory, 90 by 25, height 23 feet, with eight windows at each of the four sides ; *calidarium* (furnace), 25 feet both in length and height ; kitchen, 30 by 25 ; pantry, 70 by 60 ; corridor for alms-giving (*cella eleemosynarum*) 60 feet long ; novitiate, a

quadrangle including refectory and dormitory, 125 by 25 feet. The infirmary was to include six bed-rooms, and one room for feet-washing; and near the refectory were to be twelve cellars (*cryptae*), where at stated times baths might be prepared for the brethren. Contiguous to the church, a great quadrangle (*palatium*), 135 by 30 feet, was to be opened for guests, answering to the *foresteria* in Italian convents; along one side (probably under porticoes or otherwise divided off) forty beds with straw mattresses, for men; along the other, thirty beds (perhaps more comfortable) for « Countesses and other respectable women » (*comitissae et aliae honestae mulieres*); in the centre, moveable tables where both sexes would sit at meat; but only the visitors who came on horse-back (*cum equitatu*) to be received here; those of humbler class in rooms above the stables, an ample structure, 280 by 25 feet, where also were lodged the lay servants. Opposite the monastic front another wide building, 125 by 25 feet, was for the different artisans, goldsmiths, glaziers, marble-cutters ec., whose industry found continual employ in the service of the great cloisters.

A cemetery for laics completed the well-planned aggregate; and that spacious guest-house was, on high festivals, to be made gay with curtains and rich hangings—for what scenes of picturesque and genial merriment we may imagine. Mabillon tells us how the dependent used to offer himself, and sometimes his posterity with him, to the service of the monastery: with a rope or a bell hung round his neck, or with four coins (*denarii*) on his head, he would present himself to the Abbot and make his declaration; or else lay his head upon the altar, and in that attitude pronounce the formula of engagement.

Fleury observes that in monasteries we see reproduced the arrangements of the antique Roman mansion, as Vitruvius describes it: « The Church, which stands foremost so as to allow free access to seculars, occupies the place of that outer hall the ancients designated *atrium*, from which was entered

a court surrounded by covered galleries, known as the *peristyle*, precisely corresponding to the cloisters we enter from our churches; whence we pass into other compartments, the chapter-house answering to the *exhedra*, the refectory to the *triclinium* of the ancients; and the garden, usually at the back of the edifice, is placed also like that of the antique residence ». A Roman Council, in 826, ordered that, attached to the church, should be built « cloisters in which the clergy may dedicate themselves to ecclesiastical pursuits, where there must be one refectory and one dormitory common to all » — a plan apparently intended for those of the capitular bodies who lived together under a rule. The primitive monastic homes of Italy were almost all destroyed by Huns or Saracens, and rebuilt in the X century, for the greater part by German monks then esteemed as architects; some, it is supposed (v. Ricci, c. X), by an Irish monk who had attained renown in this art, Dungallo, as his name is italianized.

Those ancient cloisters were, no doubt, plain and rude constructions; but one excellently useful adjunct, the Bath, is mentioned in several monastic constitutions. The use of this, in primitive times, was not only advised but enforced, *liturgic* indeed; prescribed to the catechumen before Baptism, to the priest on the vigil of festivals. The baths we read of, as built beside basilicas by energetic Popes, were especially for the Clergy, if also for the pilgrim; and Theodosius extended to these the same right of asylum as to the sacred premises. A bishop of Ravenna, in the VI century, restored some *Thermae*, and adorned them with mosaics, for the use of his priests. A bishop of Naples obliged his clergy by decree to bathe on certain days. In such particulars, contrasting them with the present, we see what has been lost by the modern from the type in practice of ancient Catholicism.

Among the earliest monasteries founded in the IV century by disciples or followers of St. Antony, Pachomius, Macarius, Hilarion, in Syria and Egypt, that at Tabenna in Palestine was the first example of such an establishment in complete-

ness, with residences for several monks, instead of mere huts or caves for a single person. Here, on the slopes of the same mountain, dwelt about 7000 « religious », all under the same superior, in companies of about forty inmates to each of the several mansions. Most of the larger Oriental monasteries were thus divided over thirty or forty separate dwellings, and, for better discipline, into companies of a hundred, directed by a *centenarius*, or of ten under a *decanus*, but all in subjection to one chief authority, the Abbas, or Hegemonus. All supported themselves, providing both food and clothing by the labour of their hands, and used to spend six days of the week in such occupation alternated with sacred studies; meeting only on the Sunday for worship in one great church, the sole temple built for that numerous family. None of these monks, not even their Abbots, were in the priesthood at this phase of their existence; and the departure from the earlier system, in the V century, is supposed to have led to general decline from that primitive observance. About a century after their origin did this change supervene, when the Abbas became a priest, — among the Greeks an Archimandrite, — and his monks began to fill different offices among the Clergy, till at last, through means of Pope Gregory I, the monastic institution was raised to its definite place in the ecclesiastical sphere, and monks generally received holy orders, sometimes even without passing through minor ones. Those ancient communities were governed by traditional, orally transmitted laws, never drawn up in writing, and in principle founded on the precepts of the New Testament — their standard in all things. St. Basil was the first to draw up a Rule for his monks in the East; and not before the sixth century were written Rules known in the West; introduced first in Italy by St. Benedict, in Gaul by St. Columban, in Spain by St. Isidore of Seville. The Gospel and the Psalter formed the main studies of those laborious and simple-minded coenobites of the East; thrice a week they listened to expositions of Christian doctrine; and on Sundays



St. Pachomius explained the New Testament to the peasants of the surrounding mountains. From the mode of life described as that of the Tabenna monks, it appears that, even thus early, the library was not wanting to any monastic establishment; and for the use of its contents a most careful method was enforced. Higher developments soon claim attention in this province; as at the retreat prepared for himself and his followers by Cassiodorus, where a wide range of literary and scientific studies might be pursued, for, besides the holy Scriptures and principal Fathers of the Church, its library contained works by Grammarians, ecclesiastical History, Geography, Rhetoric, and Medicine. Thus, long before the high intellectual attainments of the mediæval cloister, had the monastery ripened into its character as the secured home of learning both in East and West.

Its architectural grandeurs do not belong to the age we are now considering. The Benedictines have been called (see Mrs Jameson) the « Fathers of Gothic Architecture » — earliest extant specimen of which, south of the Alps, is to be seen at their Subiaco cloisters, — but not there dating anterior to the X century; nor was it till two hundred years had passed since the Saint's death, that the cavern in which he used to pray on that mountain-side was enclosed within an oratory; the earlier Benedictine residence at Subiaco being situate lower on the same mountain, where now stand the *S. Scolastica* cloisters, originally dedicated to SS. Cosmo and Damian. We find no monastic architecture of the very time of St. Benedict; but a small church in Rome of olden character, associated with the story of the Saint's earlier life, *S. Benedetto in Piscinula*, near the bridge of the Tiber Island, may be considered in reference to his celebrated Order: this interesting little building, known by its present name (derived from some *piscina* in this neighbourhood) since the XII century, being, according to tradition, on the site of the mansion inhabited by St. Benedict before his retirement to Subiaco. A small campanile with a spire is its only med-

laeval feature of the exterior; an atrium, of antique columns, communicating with a chapel, in architecture resembling that of the « Holy Column » at S. Prassede — the same peculiarly vaulted ceiling, with shafts at the angles. Over the altar here is a picture of the Virgin and Child, said to be that before which St. Benedict used to pray; but referred by critics to an epoch of more advanced Art. Off this chapel, through a low door, is entered a dark narrow cell, with vaulted roof and walls of unhewn stones, said to have been the Saint's chamber; a small recess in the wall being the spot where, we are told, he used to lay his head. The church consists of nave and aisles, divided by columns evidently antique, of marble and granite different in proportions and style, with attic, and flat ceiling carved and gilt. Over the high altar is a picture full-length of St. Benedict, which Mabillon (« *Iter Italicum* ») considers a genuine contemporary portrait—though Nibby and other critics suppose it less ancient—the figure on gold background, seated on a chair with Gothic carvings, such as were in mediaeval use; the black cowl drawn over the head the hair and beard white; the aspect serious and thoughtful; in one hand a crozier, in the other the book of Rules drawn up by the Saint, displaying the words with which they begin; *Ausculia fili precepta magistri*.

The wild simplicity of the primitive convent is well exemplified in one of the most singular and picturesque among such homes in Italy — S. *Cosimato* at Vicovaro, between Tivoli and Subiaco, where the wicked monks attempted the life of St. Benedict, and where ultimately was settled one of his own communities. The actual building is quite modern, and pertains to Franciscans. Not till seen from the rear is it perceived to be a rock-built eyrie on a cliff overhanging the Anio, which flows placid through a deep gorge below. Descending from the little terrace-garden by a steep path cut in the rocks, we reach the antique convent, now deserted, consisting of a series of partly artificial caverns; one, much larger than the rest, having been the refectory, where the

poisoned cup was given to the Saint, a scene here represented in a rude painting; another, now fitted up as a rustic oratory, St. Benedict's cell. Here we see what the ancients imagined should be the cloistral type, a sort of connecting link between the solitary dens of the Thebaid and the later more civilized homes of coenobites in the West. Yet the presence of God in Nature was no check upon the evil life of men here assembled together for the avowed purpose of worshipping Him!

The wealth of the Italian monasteries prior to the general suppression, 1805-8, was considerable, but perhaps rather below what has been vaguely assumed. Monte Cassino, when at its zenith, extended dominion over 2 principalities, 20 counties, 440 villages, 250 castles, 336 manors, 23 sea-ports, and 1662 churches; and the stone lions (its heraldic device) may still, at some ruined fortress or romantic little town, greet us at the dilapidated gateway with a remembrance of that abbatial grandeur. At the time its property was confiscated in 1805 (all save the cloistral premises and a single farm, left for the support of fifty monks in what now become an *établissement*) this monastery was still supreme among thirty-nine Benedictine houses in Italy and Sicily; their total capital of 573,344 ducats, burdened with dues to the Apostolica Camera at Rome in the amount of 9,318 ducats yearly. Camaldoli then owned 130 farms and houses, besides 29 large vineyards; the Certosa, near Florence, had 83 farms and estates, estimated by the French commissaries, in 1808, at 2,600,000 francs; the Benedictines of Arezzo owned 29 estates, with capital estimated at 957,010 lire; one Vallombrosan Abbey, also Tuscan, was in the receipt of 40,070 ducats per annum (1).

The revenues of Subiaco are reported to have been, in 1837, 6,612 scudi per annum. The Camaldulese of Monte Co-

(1) At present there are twenty-nine Cassinese monasteries in Italy and Sicily; two in Piedmont, the once celebrated Novalesa near Susa, and another, having been suppressed by royal decree, 1855,

rona in Umbria, suppressed, and most harshly ejected from their cloisters, in the Winter of '62, then held property valued at 4,200,000 francs. When, in the Italian kingdom under French Empire, the monastic lands were, for the greater part, sold by auction, they brought the [total price of 400 million francs, out of which two millions were spared for the works at the cathedral of Milan. In the XVII century, the Trinità monastery had dominion over forty-eight churches and villages (but a remnant), all which are spread to view in a curious geographic plate given by Mabillon. The Sicilian Benedictines are believed to be, up to this day, wealthiest among all, thanks to the exceptional fortunes of the Church in an Island exempt from all the tempests born of French Revolution; yet even Monreale, whose revenues in the XVII century were 50,000 ducats, has now, it is said, not more than the equivalent of 2000 pounds sterling a year. At the same period of the past, San Martino, near Palermo, was in the receipt of 20,000 ducats; and San Niccolò, Catania, had 43,000 gold scudi (about 26,000 ducats) per annum.

The libraries still found in Italian cloisters are, for the most part, but remnants of wealth long since dispersed by revolution or by French domination; though fortunate exceptions are found at the great Benedictine centres. Monte Cassino possesses more than 20,000 volumes, besides its celebrated and priceless MS. codes; Trinità di Cava has also, besides the printed volumes, its inestimable archives containing more than 60,000 deeds of donation, and about 1600 bulls and diplomas — Monreale, San Martino, S. Niccolò of Catania are also abundantly provided. Vallombrosa has merely a collection made, with few excepted volumes, by purchase since 1814; and of its once valuable store of MSS. but one illuminated choir-book. Camaldoli possesses 5000 volumes; the Franciscan Laverna, 7000. Official returns show that the noticeable libraries in the whole Italian kingdom at present are 240, of which 164 are public; and that the greater number are found in Tuscany, AEmilia, and Sicily; the fact, also stated, that out of the aggregate of volumes, 4,140,287, more



than one quarter are stored in the AEmilian provinces alone, being perhaps explainable from the circumstance that those parts, till recently under Pontific government, were the special and favoured centre of cloistered families. Amidst the present trials to which the Regular Orders are exposed in Italy, more generally unpopular (I believe) than is the case in any centre of established Protestantism, the mark of attack to journalism, of ridicule to periodic caricature, and sinking under the force of legislative measures that now threaten their existence even in the entire aggregate, a compassionate interest may be felt for them in the spirit of generosity, and in just reverence for their past, whatever one may think of their present merits. Statistics lately drawn up serve to illustrate a subject that has become conspicuous among national questions affecting this country's religious life. With a clerical body reported as of 161,123 members under 229 Bishops, throughout Italy (1), the Regulars are stated to be 74,251; the mendicant Orders to be, 19,960 friars in 1506 convents; in 876 nunneries, 25,869 nuns; of the Monastic Orders, both sexes included, 28,422; the latter living on capital that yields annually 16,216,552 francs; the property of the rest (such as may be held consistent with their rules) yielding 17,407 per annum (*Archivio Politico Italiano* for '66). How decidedly the mendicant Orders and others of more recent birth have outrun the ancient and properly-called monastic bodies, is evident from the ecclesiastical statistics of Rome, where, of course, every circumstance has been favourable to such associations. In 1862 the regular communities referable to the same parent stem, in that City, were in the following numbers: Benedictines proper, 21; Camaldulense, 20; Carthusians 17; Cistercians, 39; Olivetans, 7; Sylvestrines, 15; Vallombrosans, 8; while those owning St. Francis as their common Founder (distributed in five societies) numbered

(1) The total ecclesiastical revenue is reported as 67,444,636; that of the bishoprics, 7,737,214 francs.

674; the Dominicans, 472; the all-powerful Jesuits, 289; the aggregate of inmates in Roman cloisters being 2,474 males, 2032 females (Barbier de Montault, *Année Liturg. à Rome*).

If conscientious forethought and discipline could have provided against the consequences of human frailty, the mode of electing to highest office in the Benedictine Order might have been a safeguard for perpetually just administration, unswerving fidelity to ancient observance. When the Abbey of Monte Cassino became vacant, the entire community, lay as well as ecclesiastic, concurred in appointing three esteemed monks for the responsibilities of the choice. After these had agreed together, the senior among them, kneeling at the abbatial throne in the chapter-house, proclaimed the individual chosen; the Prior then, with solemn adjuration in the name of laws Divine and human, of their saintly Founder, their faith and baptism, enjoined that if any had cause to object to that choice, he should declare it; and if none spoke to this, asked in loud voice, « You accept him? » to which all answered: « Yes, we accept him: this is the Abbot that suits us ». The elect then intoned the *Te Deum*, and passed, with all the rest, from the chapter-house into the church, where, kneeling at the altar of St. Benedict, he received from the Prior the crozier and book of rules (laid on that altar during the vacancy—in after times also the mitre); and was led to the throne by the same assistant, who knelt before him, then rose, to demand the kiss of peace, which afterwards all the rest came up, according to station, to receive from him. Thus saluted, the Prior girt their new Superior with a cincture serving to contain the money for dispensing in alms, consigned to him the keys of the church, the library, and other principal compartments on the premises. These forms being observed, a letter, signed by all who had taken part in the election, was sent to the Pope; and after receiving the official answer, the Abbot, with an attendance of monastic priests and deacons, repaired to Rome, where, receiving him to state-audience, the Pontiff addressed certain

questions to himself and to his monks, respecting the elective procedure, the intentions and principles of the new superior, to whom he then made an exhortation as to his high duties; after this, leading him to the altar, commenced Mass. After the Epistle, the celebration was suspended while the Abbot vowed before God and His Saints to maintain the strict observance of the Rule, and faithfully administer the patrimonies, of his Order; on which, the Pope, with imposition of hands, gave him in sign of investiture the crozier, ring, and that Rule long preserved in St. Benedict's autograph; led him to an elevated seat, and there installed him amidst the attendant monks. The Mass being finished, the Abbot made his offering to the Pope in two crowns and two lighted tapers—the sense of these forms certainly implying that the Papal confirmation was requisite to this principal monastic election.

Most of these ecclesiastical lords proved worthy of their high trust, men of character, virtue, and enlightenment. How absolutely regal the extent of their influences appears in the fact that at the first Crusade, when Monte Cassino became to the cross-bearing troops that passed through Italy a second halting-place after Rome, its Abbot gave commendatory letters to the French army for the Greek Emperor Alexis; and in Muratori (*Antiquit. Ital. diss.* LXV) we read three answers from that prince, addressing the Abbot as « your Holiness », and with one missive sending him a present of twenty-five books and several sacred vestments. A revival of studies and intellectual vigour at Monte Cassino was effected by the Abbot Theobald, about the beginning of the X century; but with more brilliant results in the latter years of the XI, by the efforts of the distinguished Desiderius, who became Pope as Victor II, and under whose abbatial government this monastery became the great school of revived learning, the great centre of Fine Art. In the library, now built beside a beautiful new church, to adorn which mosaicists were invited from Constantinople, the monks might study Virgil, Horace, and Cicero, besides all the Latin chron-

iclers yet known in Europe : theologic and classic lore, Poetry and Science had their home and cultivation in the calm cloisters on that consecrated mountain.

The exemption from episcopal control which contributed so much to the power, but naturally led to the abuses of the cloister, is said to have had origin even while St Benedict was still living ; in the first instance conceded to a female community, founded by St. Cesarius bishop of Arles, on the prayer of that Saint, by Pope Hormisdas. In 593 Gregory I granted to the monastery of St. Medard, at Soissons, the headship over all others in France, with complete exemption from external jurisdiction ; and in a Council held by him at Rome, 604, the same Pope published constitutions in favour of the monks, prohibiting bishops to interfere in any manner with their regulations for religious life. Eventually almost all monasteries became in every respect independent of the Episcopacy, and subject to no superior, beyond the limits of their several congregations, except the Roman Pontiff, who found in their inmates a generally faithful as well as potent alliance. If the ulterior abuses of the cloister became too flagrant to be forgotten, and such as to deserve the chastisement provoked, it is but just to remember the energetic efforts of the Church, guided by that genius of discipline never failing to Latin Catholicism, to suppress or to prevent the evil ; and the repeated measures of Councils and Popes, for this object, redound to their honour.

Celestinus III, in 1191, eliminated that dangerous principle according to which children, once offered to the monastery, could never withdraw or choose their after career ; a wise innovation confirmed by the Council of Trent, which prescribed that such « oblates » should be at full liberty, on attaining adult age, to decide as to their future. The General Council of Lateran (1215) ordered that, once in three years, all Abbots and Priors should hold chapters to order reforms or maintain the standard of religious observance, and that deputies from the bishops should attend on such occasions ;



should also be invested with faculties for visiting and reforming the cloister, and even for deposing superiors, *salvo* the episcopal consent. By that Council it was also forbidden to Abbots to hold pluralities by governing different cloisters together. In 1352, Innocent VI annulled the system of the *commenda* granted to laics, so inevitably abusive and tyrannically weighing on the monks who were its victims; and the scandal of other description springing from the junction of monasteries of males and females in actually contiguous buildings, and under the same superior, was denounced repeatedly before it could be in all instances put down. Finally the Tridentine Council completed what others had begun by subjecting all monasteries to the visitation of their diocesans. The law of the Italian Kingdom, passed in May, 1855, for suppressing all corporations of secular and Regular Clergy, as well as all female religious communities, those dedicated to special offices of charity or public instruction alone excepted, has been in some instances carried out with great harshness, and too often in a manner exceeding the terms legally laid down. According to what was guaranteed, all communities should be left at peace in their convents, maintained by allowance from the state, until gradually removed by death (4). One may reprobate such measures, and sympathise with many innocent victims; yet we must distinguish that which is local, and the result of an extraordinary national excitation, from that which is a sign and consequence of change in moral tendencies. Opposition to the monastic system had begun before the periods of Italian or French

(4) The Roman Gazette stated (I think about a year after the change of government) that up to that time the Regulars in the Anconitan Marches had received no indemnity for their support; and that the nuns, but for aid from private benefactors, would have been left utterly destitute. In many other provinces of this kingdom, as the Tuscan, Æmilian, Neapolitan, and Sicilian, no monastic property has been confiscated from entire Orders, though several convents have been occupied.

revolution, and has been carried out by governments of different principles, both conservative and radical. Under Joseph II no fewer than 184 monasteries were suppressed, and more than two million florins, their property, was confiscated throughout the Empire. In the Tuscan States those establishments were reduced from 321 to 213, and the number of their inmates from 6030 to 4060, under Peter Leopold; in the Neapolitan States the « religious » of both sexes were reduced from the proportion of 10 to 5 in 1000 of the entire population, and 88 monasteries in Sicily alone suppressed, under the administration of Tanucci, besides the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767; and in the brief recent interval from 1830 to 1835, it is reported that 3000 monasteries, throughout Europe, have had like fate; 187 in Poland alone during the year 1841. In Spain and Portugal the adversities that have visited the cloisters in modern time are well known. Beckford was (I believe) the last English writer to see and record the palatial splendours, now all extinct, of the great Spanish monasteries; yet late report assures us that at this day the number of communities (not individuals) of Friars, still in favour, amounts to 1683 in that kingdom! The terrific scenes enacted by a godless French soldiery in the last year of the past century at Monte Cassino — with furious pillage and every species of detestable profanation, when, with all other movable wealth the Holy Eucharist was stolen for the sake of the vessel containing it — *these* were indeed a fearful omen for the spirit of the age about to dawn on Europe. Yet, remembering the vitality shown by Religious Orders after so many shocks and tempests of the Past, we may doubt whether they can be totally and for ever abolished on any other condition than the unimaginable one of extinguishing Roman Catholic Christianity. Their system had its source in principles deeply rooted within minds swayed by religious sentiment, in that it not only held out a hope and offered a haven to the sorrowing and heart-sick, to cureless melancholy and haunting remorse, but promised the means of re-

conciliation between the transitory present and the eternal future, of rescue from that empire of Vanity, which often seems to bear as along, whether we will or no, on a resistless stream to the ocean of nullities.

Von dem Gewalt, der allen Wesen bindet,  
Befreit der Mensch sich der sich ueberwindet.

(Goethe).

The Religious Orders soon became conspicuous among the subjects of Art; and one naturally desires to recognise the figures of their Founders by symbolism; of their followers, more easily known, by the common costume. St. Benedict prescribed to his monks uniformity and economy, but no particular colour in dress. Mabillon tells us they wore, from the first, the tunic white, the cowl and scapular black, but since the X century, black alone—hence their popular name in England, « black monks ». From the origin Art introduced their Founder in black monastic dress, sometimes with mitre and crozier, or, in one hand, a bundle of rods (to signify the discipline he enforced, or simply the *aspergillum* of holy water for driving away evil spirits), or else a broken cup, allusive to the story of the poison; sometimes with a raven by his side, holding a loaf in its beak (see his statue at St. Peter's), allusive to the other murderous attempt by the wicked priest, who sent him poisoned bread, given by the Saint to a tame raven, first rejected, but then, after his blessing, carried away by the bird to be hidden beyond reach. In the majestic statue by Tenerani (at St. Paul's), one of those examples where sculpture seems to present the image of a Soul, he is seated with the crozier in his hand, but no other symbol. In the pictures in churches belonging to Orders branching off from the Benedictine, that have adopted white costume, the common Founder appears also in white. And beside him we often see the dignified figure of a nun, in black with white veil, — his sister St. Scholastica, who certainly be-

came dedicate to the religious life (almost the sole fact ascertainable respecting her); and whose symbol is the Dove, in which form St. Benedict is said to have seen her soul ascending on the day of her death. As to the vicissitudes of fashion, it is a noticeable fact of the VI century that the barbarian invasions caused a general abandonment of classic costume in the West, and the adoption instead of dress like that worn by northern races, more curt and tight-fitting, much less dignified. The *habitus religionis*, or private dress of ecclesiastics, begins to be mentioned in the V century; for the clergy, in all things conservative, continued faithful to old style, regardless of the capricious goddess; and the long robe (*vestis talaris*) was deemed requisite to the decencies of their calling; all the details of costume appearing at the altar to this day being, in fact, nothing else than ornamented copies of what was once in every-day wear. The monks and ascetics of old often assumed the classic pallium. The hermits of the desert had, of course, no particular dress, but seem to have preferred the cloak of sheep-skins or goat-skins, called *melote*; hence, naturally enough, were sometimes mistaken for wild beasts by the simple shepherd who suddenly came upon them in their solitude—which impression of their strange aspect may supply a key to the mystery of St. Antony's encounter with the man-goat, who declared himself to be one of those by Gentile error called Fauns and Satyrs, as so naïvely narrated by St. Jerome. The first nuns wore a peculiar head-dress, *mitra* or *mitella*; and the ceremonial veiling for consecration to their state, is at least as ancient as the time of St. Gregory I, whose works contain a Mass to be celebrated on such occasion, with the proper prayer, *super ancillas velandas*. Those subjects in which Art has extended the fame of monastic Founders far beyond the limits of their cloisters, and even of church-history, acquire a high interest when memories and associations are familiar to us; and such personifications of pure thought and heroic charity are more important, more affecting, in the moral



light that surrounds them than in respect to any merely artistic purpose they may serve—as is urged for them with such eloquence by the authoress of « Legends of Monastic Orders ». In painting they may be recognized either by action or symbolism :

ST. ROMUALD, deceased 1027, founder of the Camuldulose Hermits, an aged men with long beard, in ample white habit, leaning on a crutch.

ST. GIOVANNI GUALBERTO, d. 1073, Vallombrosans, dark brown habit, sometimes the embroidered cope over it, with a carved cross and crutch; or, as a secular, in act of forgiving his brother's murderer on the ascent from Florence to S. Miniato.

ST. BRUNO, d. 1101, Carthusians, white habit, shaven crown, in attitude of prayer or meditation; guiding his followers to the height of the Grande Chartreuse; or, in the scene of the funeral, witnessing the reanimation of the dead professor.

ST. BERNARD, d. 1153, Cistercians (whose founders, however, in 1098, were St. Robert de Molesme, St. Stephen Harding, and five other religious) — white habit, shaven crown, with book or writing implements; sometimes three mitres (the bishoprics he refused) on book, or with mitre and crozier, as Abbot of Clairvaux; beside him a fettered dragon (Heresy); or in act of kneeling before a vision of the Blessed Virgin.

ST. NORBERT, d. 1134, Premonstratensians, (from *pré montré*, site indicated for their settlement by a vision), with mitre and crozier as Archbishop of Magdeburg; holding a chalice above which is a spider, allusive to the story of his drinking without injury from the sacramental cup, though a venomous insect was inside.

ST. ALBERIC, Patriarch of Jerusalem, d. 1212, has been considered the founder of the Carmelites, and is represented in episcopal robes with a palm; his death by assassination at Acre, when on his way to attend the Lateran Council, being regarded as martyrdom. But historic evidence refers this Order

to another originator, Bertoldo of Calabria, a crusader, who, in 1156, raised for himself and his companions a cluster of cells on Mount Carmel, where for some centuries previous had abode solitaries desirous to tread in the footsteps of Elijah. At the request of their Abbot, Alberic, in 1209, gave them a Rule imposing extreme austerities: but to this day, the Carmelites persist in claiming Elijah as their true Founder, in which capacity the Prophet appears among the colossal statues raised by Religious Orders to their Patriarchs, at St. Peter's. They have substituted the coenobite to the anchorite life, and are known by the white mantle over a brown habit.

ST. JOHN DE MATHA, d. 1213, Trinitarians, founded for the Redemption of Christian captives; white habit with red and blue cross on breast (black mantle worn above white by some branches of Order); fetters in his hand or at his feet.

A romantic subject, sometimes seen in art, associated either with St. John de Matha or with St. Felix de Valois, his companion in the hermit-life led by both before the founding of his Order, is the appearance, to one or both, of a stag with a crucifix between its horns, in a forest-solitude: the legend being that such a portent, (a blue and red cross, not a crucifix, seen between a stag's horns), confirmed the Saint in his intent of going to Rome to found a religious Order, as first suggested by another vision in which an Angel appeared to him, whilst celebrating his first Mass, in white garments with that sign on the breast.

ST. FRANCIS, d. 1226, Friars Minor (Franciscans, Conventuals, Capuchins), dark brown with cord for girdle; a lily, or crucifix, sometimes a lamb; kneeling before a crucifix and skull; in act of receiving the stigmata on Monte Laverna. ST. CLARA d. 1253, Franciscan, or Clarisse Nuns, same habit with veil; cross or lily; crozier and book; the ostensorium with the Holy Sacrament, allusive to her expelling the Saracens from her convent at Assisi by displaying that sacred object.

ST. DOMINIC, d. 1228, Dominicans or Order of Preachers, white with black mantle; a lily, crucifix, or book, a star over his head; beside him a dog holding a torch, allusive to the dream of his mother before his birth.

ST. PETER NOLASCO, d. 1256, Order of Mercy (*La Merce* — *Mercede*), a reform of the Trinitarian, for the redemption of captives; an aged man, white habit, with the armorial shield of Aragon, whose king, James « el conquistador », assumed the headship of this Order, 1258.

ST. PHILIP BENIZZI, d. 1285, is revered as the chief Saint, though not the Founder, of the Servants of Mary, Servites, whose Order was originated by five Florentine noblemen fourteen years before he joined them in 1247: their Rule similar to the Augustinian; but it is only in Florence, within the cloisters of their splendid church, the *Annunziata*, that any remarkable art-illustration presents to us their story. A symbol that often accompanies the figure of Filippo Benizzi is the triple crown, sometimes offered by a cherub, alluding to his having actually refused the Papacy when the votes of the Conclave, after the death of Clement IV, 1268, had accorded in electing him. At the *Annunziata* the lives of the seven Founders form the series in the inner, that of St. Philip in the outer cloister.

S. BERNARDO DE' TOLOMEI, d. 1348, Olivetans (from their first settlement on Monte Oliveto, near Siena), white, holding, or receiving from the Blessed Virgin, an olive-branch.

St. Augustine and St. Jerome do not appear in Art as Founders of the Orders called by their names, but are familiar in the group of the Four Latin Doctors, there associated with St. Gregory and Ambrose; St. Augustine only distinguished from St. Ambrose by the black habit under his episcopal vestments. The several hermits and communities hitherto under no particular rule, were required to accept the Augustinian, with addition of stricter clauses, by Innocent IV and Alexander IV, 1244-56.

ST. FRANCESCA ROMANA (dei Ponziani), d. 1448, foundress of the Benedictine Oblates, a sisterhood not strictly cloistered nor bound by vows; an elderly female in nun's dress with white veil, accompanied by a youthful Angel, according to the beautiful legend that, for some years, her Guardian Angel was perpetually and visibly present to her—see her Life by Lady G. Fullerton. The Orders of the XVI century, — Jesuits (St. Ignatius, d. 1566); Hospitalers (St. Juan Calabita, called « John of God », d. 1550); Oratorians (St. Philip Neri, d. 1595); Theatines (St. Gaetano, d. 1547); Infermieri, or *Agonizanti*, Ministers of the Infirm (St. Camillo de Lellis, d. 1604), known by the red cross on their black habit, — have less prominence in Art, though the first named Founder may be recognised by a fine type of head, being usually seen as vested for Mass, with the holy monogram near, amid a glory or on a scroll, and an open book with the first words of his Rule, *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. St. John of God has a pomegranate surmounted by a cross, symbol for Granada, where he founded his first hospital and died; or a kneeling beggar beside him. St. Francis de Paola, d. 1507, founder of the Friars Minim, whose intercourse with the dying tyrant Louis XI forms such an impressive episode, is known by a habit like the Franciscan, but the cowl different, usually drawn over the head, and « Charitas », his appropriate motto, in a glory or on a scroll. St. Theresa, d. 1582 (Reformed Carmelites) is most conspicuous in Art among saints of this age, known by the Dove that breathes inspiration (which she never claimed), a heart with the holy monogram, or an attendant Angel who aims an arrow at her breast.

Some ancient Orders — Grandmont monks, Celestines, Humiliati — have passed away leaving no monumental trace of their existence. The Sylvestrines, still extant, though now much reduced in number, known by their dark blue habit, have scarcely appeared in art-creations as an Order, nor as represented by their founder, the Hermit St. Silvestro



Gozzolino of Osimo, d. 1267. The angelic Sisters of Charity are beginning to appear in illustrated scenes of the battle and campaign. Other more modern Orders—Scolopians (founded by St. Joseph Calasanzio, d. 1648), Redemptorists (by St. Alfonso Liguori, d. 1787), Passionists (by Blessed Paul of the Cross, d. 1773), — have yet scarce supplied subjects for pencil or chisel. Yet these too have obtained more or less extension and influence. The fluctuations of social and moral life have caused continual vicissitude to these Religious Bodies; and in the adverse as well as the favourable movement we may discover impulses not altogether alien to Christianity (1).

(1) For historic correctness it must be stated that, contrary to the opinion of Helyot, derived from Eusebius and other ancient writers, the solitaries called Therapeuts cannot be classed among Christians, but as a Jewish sect, whose mortified life is described by Philo in terms quite conclusive, and who settled on that very mountain of Nitria afterwards peopled by Christian hermits. The three great Benedictine Abbeys of the Neapolitan States were deprived of all territories and feudal privileges by Joseph Buonaparte in 1803; after the restoration of 1814 were reintegrated in their spiritual, but not in their temporal rights; and subsequently to that period Monte Cassino received from the State 14,000 ducats per annum in lieu of its lost property—even which subvention has been withdrawn by the new Government. In 1842 was established in those cloisters a printing press, from which the works of Padre Tosti, and others of enduring value have been given to publicity; but after the revolutions of '48-9, these activities were put a stop to by Ferdinand II, with the natural instinct of despotism. In '61, the gifted P. Tosti addressed an eloquent appeal, on behalf of his Order and his Abbey, to the Italian Parliament, aimed at the averting of a blow that would deprive Italy of one of the most beneficent and revered among Institutions fostered by Christian civilization; and we may hope that this illustrious centre of learning and piety will at least be exempted from the fate of so many others, as was the distinct promise made in regard to Monte Cassino by the Minister of Grace and

Justice, Signor Cassinis, to the Parliament at Turin; as was also the sense in which a private appeal was answered by Count Cavour shortly before his death. The celebrated Archivio of that Abbey now contains 800 codes; but how greatly it has been despoiled is evident from an interesting fact supplied by M. Dantier, who discovered in the Vatican Library one of the many parchments from that storehouse bearing the Cassinese number 4900! The other Benedictine monastery in the south, Monte Vergine, near Avellino, founded 4449, has an Archivio said to contain 24000 documents relating to its annals and possessions. It is a curious fact in the story of the decline of monasteries prior to the Reformation, that Monte Cassino had to suffer the insult of being comprised among the *sixteen* rich Abbacies bestowed, like so many toys, upon the Medici child who afterwards became Pope Leo X! In Montalembert's pages of fervid eloquence we learn what the present fate of the magnificent cloisters of northern Europe: Clairvaux converted into a female penitentiary; Fontevault, Mont St. Michel also *maisons de détention*; Cluny transformed into a *haras*, where stallions are kept on the site of the high altar; Le Bec (the retreat of Lanfranc and St. Anselm), and eight other ancient abbeys in France sharing the same fate; the Chartreuse of Seville has become a factory of earthenware; swine are fed under the sculptured cloisters of the Cistercians in Peregord; whilst the Abbeys that now serve for stables « are innumerable ».

See Helyot, « Hist. d. Ordres Religieux »; Mabillon, *Annal. Ord. S. Benedict*, and « Etudes Monastiques », (fascinating and genial); Muratori, *Antiquit. Ital. Diss.* LXV and LXVI; Bonanni, « Catalogo d. Ordini Religiosi » (at once complete and compendious, with no fewer than 328 engravings of religious costumes); Hurter, « Tableau d. Instit. du Moyen Age »; Cibrario, « Economia Politica del Medio Evo »; Digby, « Mores Catholici » v. X; Montalembert, « Moines de l'Occident », Dandolo, « Monachismo e Leggende »; Dantier, « Monastères Bénédictins d'Italie » (a recent work presenting much knowledge with great charms of style); Moroni, *Dizionario*; Mrs Jameson, « Légends of Monastic Orders ».

Italian cloisters have produced a literature serving for their own illustration, of great abundance and value, sometimes throwing light on general and on artistic interests. Among the best specimens may be cited the stories of Monte Cassino by P. Tosti, of S. Marco Flo-

rence) by P. Marchese, of the Ostian Basilica by Mgr. Nicolai, of S. Prassede (Rome) by P. Davanzati; of S. Croce (Rome) by P. Besozzi; of S. Benedetto (Subiaco) by P. Bini; of the Franciscan Convents in the Papal States by P. Casimiro; and the truly monumental work by the Jesuit P. Richa, « Chiese Fiorentine ». For another aspect which, as part of the truth, ought also to be considered, see the Signora Caracciolo's « Misteri del Chiostro Napolitano ».

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## IX.

### St. Gregory the Great.

GREGORY the First, not less justly revered as a Saint than honoured as « the Great », was the son of Gordianus, a Senator, and Sylvia, a pious matron of the historic Anician family from whom the once powerful Conti, of mediaeval renown, were proud to claim descent. At the age of thirty he was appointed to the high office of Prefect, or (according to some writers — v. *Art de vérifier les Dates*) Praetor of Rome; but, after the death of his father, renounced all worldly advantages to take religious vows in the monastery founded by him in his own paternal mansion on the Clivus Scauri (Coelian Hill), dedicated to St. Andrew, and, as most of his biographers suppose, aggregated to the Benedictine Order. After being raised to the rank of Cardinal Deacon by Pope Pelagius, Gregory still continued to inhabit those cloisters, and for some time under the authority of another, not desiring even the abbatial office for himself; and he soon founded six other monasteries on his large estates in Sicily, all endowed out of his property, and all placed under the rule of St. Benedict. Being sent by the Pope on an embassy to Constantinople, about the year 579, and there resident till 584, he composed his « *Morals* », on the book of Job, within that interval, being still in the company of his faithful monks, a certain number of whom, at least, had left his monastery with him in order to remain beside their beloved superior—for it seems that, before this time, he had become Abbot



of the St. Andrew community. On his return, Pelagius appointed him to the already high post of Secretary at the Papal Curia. That pontiff having fallen a victim to the terrible pestilence in 590, the suffrages of the Clergy and People at once, and unanimously, declared for the election of Gregory as his successor. But he resisted long and earnestly; took all possible means to withdraw himself from the honourable burden; and even wrote to the Greek Emperor, Mauritius, requesting that the sovereign *veto* (now efficacious on such occasions) might be given against his appointment; but all in vain; the letter was intercepted, and another sent instead, with the usual announcement of the event, in the name of all concerned, and demand for the imperial sanction. The unwilling nominee had then recourse to flight, and left his cloisters to conceal himself in the church of SS. Cosmo and Damian on the Forum (probably in that dark narrow crypt still to be seen below it); where, the significant legend adds, he was soon miraculously discovered by either a column of fire or a Dove, that hovered over the sacred walls shedding rays of light from its wings; and at last, after a *sede vacante* of seven months, Gregory was led with triumph and jubilee to St. Peter's, there to be consecrated Pope, on the 3rd September, 590 — even legend ascribing to this election a character essentially popular: *Gregorium, licet totis viribus renitentem, plebs omnis elegit*, says the *Legenda Aurea*.

A miserable spectacle was that presented by Italy at this period; and perhaps the city that bore the most fearful traces of long-endured calamities was Rome, where was still raging the plague brought on in the sequel to a tremendous inundation of the Tiber, when the many carcasses of drowned serpents so infected the air as, it was believed, to have been the cause of this new affliction. The capital of Empire might now, indeed, be considered absolutely fallen. On one hand were the barbarian invaders who had repeatedly assailed and despoiled her; and on the other, a corrupt and effeminate native population, towards whom the foreign occu-

pants actually applied the name « Roman », as an epithet of contempt and ignominy ! Together with Ravenna , Padua , Cremona , Genoa , and Naples , the ancient Capital was subject to the Byzantine Emperor , who governed through an Exarch ; and it is for the first time , under the pontificate of Gregory , that we read of a visit made by that official , from Ravenna , to the discrowned metropolis. Romanus , the then Exarch , was met by the people formed into companies , and by the army with banners waving , at some distance outside the gates ; by the Pontiff and clergy was received with honour at the Lateran , whence he proceeded , with escort of the multitude , to take up his residence on the Palatine , in the long-deserted halls of the Caesars ; but this representative of a feeble and perfidious Power came to Rome empty-handed , only to extort gold from the stores so carefully accumulated and well-spent by the Church ; and , regardless of the dangers then besetting her , to withdraw all the Greek troops then in garrison , for distributing their forces over other Italian towns. The two highest Byzantine officials in the City at this period were the *Magister Militum* and the Prefect (*praefectus urbis*) ; to which former were referred all military , to the latter all civil affairs as chief arbiter ; the Praefect being invested with a jurisdiction that extended in a radius of one hundred miles round the walls , though indeed but a shadow of the power wielded by his predecessors under ancient Emperors , and retained at least as late as the days of Gratian and Valentinian. The *Magister Militum* held rank somewhat analogous to that of Duke , but , it seems , was only from time to time appointed for local administration , either in Rome or in other cities , especially Naples. It may be concluded that the Senate had by this time either totally passed away , or sunk into a mere corporation of Decurions , similar to those existing in other Italian towns not yet under subjection to the Longobards. Some writers , indeed , have endeavoured to establish the fact of this august body's prolonged existence in the VI century ; but the total silence of

earlier historians is significant ; still more so is the entire absence of allusion to such a body in the writings of Gregory himself ; and the fact that when the Longobard Agilulph sent an embassy to treat for peace with Rome, he desired the signature of the Pontiff *alone* for ratification of the instrument drawn up, speaks most clearly.

Arianism was now almost exclusively the creed of Goths and Visigoths in the North, of Longobards in Italy, whilst the Nestorian and Donatist schisms prevailed in Greece and Africa. Society seemed in a state of dissolution among the Italian races ; and such incredible corruption of manners had penetrated even into the Church that there were in those days Bishops who spent their time and revenues in luxurious feasting, or who (still more profligate) ferociously assailed their enemies or rivals on the high ways ; nuns who abandoned their convents to become the infamous associates of robbers, assisting to pillage the religious houses that had fostered them, or even to murder their former superiors ! The Basilica of St. Peter had become more like a hall of public-amusements than a sanctuary ; and hence the secular power, naturally losing respect for the sacred profession, now began to condemn priests and bishops to imprisonment, to scourging, or death. « No hope », says an Italian historian, « existed for the resurrection of the Roman world, still less for that of the barbarian—the first tended to a suffocating centralization, the second to an exterminating decay ; but Deity, through the action of the Church, saved Humanity.—And for this great work, the regeneration of social life, appeared the instrument, raised up with suitable qualifications by Providence, in Gregory ». Unlimited in charities, unwearied in discharge of duties, this saint exemplified truly the principle that he who is chief over all should be servant of all ; and it was in opposition to the Patriarch of Constantinople, who claimed the title of « universal Bishop », that he adopted that, since taken by all Popes, « Servant of the servants of God ». His ecclesiastical activity, his political exertions and boundless

charities would require many pages to record. He treated for peace with the Longobards, administered the vast patrimonies of the Holy See in Sicily; continually instructed the people by his discourses; enlarged and beautified the liturgy, reduced to the form since preserved the simple yet majestic chant known as the Gregorian »; founded a school for sacred music; and, whilst thus occupied, attended to the ecclesiastical affairs of the whole Western world. One of the undertakings most illustrating his pontificate, was the mission to England, and founding of the Metropolitan sees of York and Canterbury, A. D. 597. Among the points of discipline enforced by him, though by no means of his introduction, was the celibacy in the diaconal as well as higher orders of the Clergy. His benevolence was not limited to Christian spheres alone: hearing that certain Jews had been baptized by force, he expressly forbade such abuse; and when a synagogue had been violently taken from that people, wrote to the Bishop responsible, desiring it should be restored. Various are the observances of the Church still maintained as he originated: the sprinkling of ashes on the head on the first day of Lent, the commemoration of the five Virgin Martyrs in the Mass, the procession and litany of the Rogations (25th April), the blessing and processional carrying of palms on the Sunday before Easter, the *lavanda* (or symbolic washing of the feet of pilgrims by bishops officiating on Holy Thursday), the united festivals of St. Peter and Paul with their more splendid observance at the Vatican, the organised « Stations » for Lent and Advent at principal churches in Rome; also, among his services to sacred literature, the compilation of the Breviary, in the nucleus at least of that body of offices for ecclesiastical devotions, either in private or in the cathedral-choir. Neither infirm health nor overwhelming occupations caused Gregory to desist from those literary labours which have left to us their fruit in so many moral and theological treatises—on the Book of Job and the Psalms, an *Antiphonarium* and *Sacramentarium*, a *Pastoralis* on the duties of pastors



(translated into English by Alfred the Great ec.), besides letters that fill XIV books. The temporal power of the Pontificate became, beyond doubt, a high magistracy, though not yet a political principality under his tenure; and its possessions, greatly increased by the estates added from his inheritance, were now of such wealth that a modern writer affirms, « the civil list of St. Gregory to have by far exceeded that of Pius IX ». Besides the Sicilian demesnes, others of great extent in Africa, a district in Gaul administered by a patrician, and several Italian territories were now owned by the Papacy sufficient for a principedom; while judges and other officials acted under its authority in almost all parts of the peninsula, in Liguria, Calabria, Apulia, the district of the Cottian Alps, as well as in the islands, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and also in Dalmatia. The use made by Gregory of these ample means was indeed noble; for him it was the perpetual laying up of treasures greater in Heaven than on earth. The poor of Rome and its environs were entirely supported by him. Every day the necessitous in each street were relieved by officers expressly appointed; on the first of every month an abundant largess in food, corn, wine, legumes, fish ec., was distributed to all in want. At each Easter-festival was beheld the spectacle, — *not* of the secular pomps with which the High Priest now officiates amid files of bayonets and cordons of troops, that profane instead of honouring the sacred occasion—but of the benignant Father of his people celebrating at the altar without any array of court-magnificence, and dispensing his bounties, in golden coin, to all of the many entitled to receive from him the kiss of peace at Mass. Every day did this holy man wait upon twelve poor guests, fed at his table; and before sitting down to his own meal, it was his practice to send dishes, with his blessing, from the fare prepared for himself to several of the suffering class just raised above the condition of mendicancy. So sensitive was his conscience that on hearing of a pauper being found dead, as it seemed, from hunger, he did penance by abstaining for some

days from sacramental rites, as though himself responsible for this misfortune. Far beyond the Italian limits did that royal beneficence extend its cares. At Jerusalem a large hospice for pilgrims was maintained by Gregory. On Mount Sinai another such place of refuge was founded, and a community of monks in all their wants supported by him. The captives who had been reduced to slavery by Longobard invaders were, from time to time, ransomed by him; and one of his most assiduous cares was for the rescue of those numerous victims whom long-continued wars had depressed into the lowest of social ranks. A magistrate in some provincial town having ordered a free citizen to be scourged, he wrote to remonstrate earnestly against such unjust and degrading punishment. We find him, on other occasions, providing for his aged nurse; for blind paupers; for a condemned criminal, to whom he sent food and clothing, no less carefully than for an indigent bishop whom he supplied with a winter-dress; yet, amidst these occupations and other higher duties, he found time to attend to agriculture, the rearing of cattle, the prices of grain, the transport of materials for building, &c. There is no doubt that the Papacy, exalted through the acts and example of such a representative, now commanded the highest respects, exercised the highest influences, and shone forth in the most radiant light ever enjoyed by it; and this long before it had assumed a place among the governments of Europe, before it had begun to enrol armies, to surround itself with mercenary troops, to be served by diplomatic ministers, by public or secret police.

The first public transaction of Gregory's Pontificate was called for by the awful calamities amidst which it opened; and is one that shows how completely the Roman populace was now under control of the Church, how potent within its sphere the authority vested in their bishop. A general penitential procession, to deprecate the Divine wrath, and implore deliverance from the pestilence, was ordered on such system that all classes, clergy and laity, males and females, paupers

and children, could take part, divided into seven companies, who were severally to assemble in as many churches, and thence proceed to the basilica chosen for the final solemnization, *S. Maria Maggiore*. As the mournful train passed through the streets, thousands of monks and nuns, women vested and veiled entirely in black, men in a peculiar habit with a cowl (perhaps like that in which pious confraternities appear muffled in their processional devotions at the present day), all carrying tapers, and joining in the chant of litanies, hymns, and the *Kyrie eleison*, it must have presented a scene illustrating the complete transformation of classic Rome under Christian and sacerdotal influences. Nor did the occasion pass without tragic—legends add, miraculous incident: no fewer than eighty persons fell dead, struck by the mortal endemic, in the very ranks of that pilgrimage; and when the company of priests, with Gregory at their head, reached the bridge below the mole of Hadrian, an Archangel was seen hovering above that pile, in act of sheathing his sword to indicate the cessation of the Divine chastisement, in memory of which vision was that Mausoleum, already known as the « Castle of Theodoric », and afterwards as that of Crescentius, eventually called by the name which has passed also to the bridge below its battlements. It is stated that the identical Madonna-picture, attributed by baseless tradition to St. Luke, which now hangs in resplendent setting of agate, jasper, and lapis lazuli, in the Borghese chapel at *S. Maria Maggiore*, was carried by the Pope in this procession—if so, a circumstance that enhances not merely the contrast but the opposition between the worship of the primitive and later Church.

But the colouring of the marvellous lent to this story fades away before critical research, like mists before sunrise. No historic evidence is at hand in respect to those supernatural details; indeed the silence of John the Deacon, an eye-witness, is conclusive against it: while, on the other hand, the historic proof is found (see Maimbourg) to show that the

pestilence did not, according to tradition, instantly cease, but gradually diminished, after those solemn intercessions, to break out again with fresh violence at a date not far removed (1). The monumental traces of this event in Gregory's pontificate are not the less interesting.

Over the high altar of the Franciscan church, *Aracoeli*, on the Capitol, hangs one of those ancient Madonna pictures still ascribed by tradition to St. Luke, of which seven are said to be extant by the same Apostle-artist. A Vatican code cited by Padre Casimiro (« History of Franciscan Convents ») refers to this as follows, in Latin: « It is commonly said that seven images of the Mother of God were painted by the Blessed Luke, of which four are believed to be in Rome — the third being seen in the temple called *Aracoeli*, and one which the Roman people have recourse to with great devotion ».

This image, evidently of Byzantine art, from the Greek cross embroidered on the dark purple mantle over the breast, disputes with two others, alike accredited, the claim to be the identical Madonna carried by St. Gregory in that procession. But the writings of the Saint, as also those of Gregory of Tours, and the life given by the Bollandists, contain no mention of an image on this occasion; and we may entertain the doubt whether such superstitious usage receives any support from the example of that holy pontiff. Baronius, Durandus, and other authorities are indeed on the apposite side; and according to some, it was the picture now at *SS. Domenico e Sisto*, on the Quirinal, (where is a memorial to that effect on a tablet) which St. Gregory made choice of for such religious honours. In order to reconcile contradictory claims, it has been ingeniously suggested that *all* the Madonna-pictures

(1) Similar devotions were ordered in Rome at the first visitation of cholera, 1837; the same image was solemnly exposed and carried in procession, a general illumination ensuing; *after* which, as was natural, the malady rose to its greatest height.



most prized in Rome were then brought forward, or that, as the procession was repeated on three successive days, a different one appeared each time.

A record of the event on parchment is in the archives of the Ara Coeli Convent, and is published by Wadding (*Annal. Minor.*). During the progress of those worshippers, we are told not only that 80 fell dead in the streets, struck by the pestilence; but that before the holy Image the skies, elsewhere clouded and tempestuous, became serene and radiant, the storm dispersing before the semblance of the heavenly Queen :

Whereso' er she moves, the clouds anon  
Disperse, or, under a divine constraint,  
Reflect some portion of her glorious light.

Having reached the bridge, the whole company, it is said, beheld that angelic vision, whilst a chorus of harmonious voices was heard in air, singing the anthem (since adopted by the Church for vesper-services during a period after Easter) *Regina coeli laetare — quia quem meruisti portare, resurrexit sicut dixit. Alleluia!* — to which Gregory chanted in response: *Ora pro nobis Deum. Alleluia!* A chapel at the summit of the castle, dedicated by Nicholas III to the Archangel Michael, contained, as the M.S. states, a painting of this incident, with the words under the Madonna image: *Hæc est vera Imago ecclesiae Aracoeli*, testifying in favour of this against the claims of the rival pictures; and still has this legend its annual commemoration on St. Mark's Day, when, in the procession of the parochial Clergy to St. Peter's, on arriving at the bridge, the Friars of Aracoeli, together with the Chapter of St. Maria Maggiore, chant the Antiphon, *Regina Coeli laetare*. Again was this image carried through Rome during a visitation of plague, A. D. 1348, and, when in sight of the castle, the Angel's statue on the summit bowed its head several times before the Virgin Mother, as more

than sixty persons swore to have seen—but under such influences of panic and excitement, how easily may all similar illusions be accounted for! (1) On the inner side of the valves, usually closed, over that picture at Aracoeli, we see represented in silver reliefs, referred to the XIII century, the figure of St. Gregory kneeling before the mole of Hadrian, and an Angel hovering above. Otherwise this striking subject has been neglected by art, save in the indifferent statuary, — the colossal bronze Angel now on the castle's summit, by Verschaffelt (last century), and the inferior marble statue that preceded it, now on the landing-place of a staircase in the interior, — ordered by Popes to commemorate the assumed vision.

The political events of this period came in rapid succession, and to Rome brought disaster. Gregory, however, had the consolation of welcoming into the pale of Catholicism a royal convert, and shortly afterwards, almost a whole nation led by his example; for, about the year 603, Agilulph, Duke of Turin, who had been raised to the Longobardic throne through his marriage with Theodelinda, widow of Autharis, king of that people in Italy, was induced by the influence of that pious princess to abandon Arianism, followed in this step by the great majority of the Longobards, who now joined the orthodox Church. But this conversion in no way modified the hostile designs of those conquerers, whose dominion extended over much the greater part of Italy, and whose capital was Pavia. The siege of Rome was carried on by Ariulph, Duke of Spoleto, whose forces continued to beleaguer the

(1) On that occasion the stimulant given to devout feeling and gratitude, after the cessation of the plague, brought such a wealth of offerings to the Madonna's shrine at Aracoeli, that the amount sufficed for erecting the lofty marble staircase at whose summit that church's front looks down from the Capitol. For the extraordinary delusions prevailing, and more or less possessing the public mind even in more enlightened ages, during visitations of pestilence, see Mackay, « *Story of Popular Delusions* ».

City and devastate its environs both before and after the election of St. Gregory. It was in vain the Pontiff sought aid from the Exarch of Ravenna, to whom he represented the extreme peril of the emergency, and how the City was left with no other garrison than a detachment of the Greek battalion called « Theodosian », who could scarce be persuaded to keep guard on the walls at night, because for some time their pay had been wanting. At last that siege was raised, not through any valorous effort, but purely through the liberal expenditure from ecclesiastical funds determined on by the pontiff, who thus saved Rome by becoming, « the paymaster of the Longobards », as he styles himself with mournful irony in a letter to the Empress Constantina, wife of Mauritius. A tragic picture of public calamities is drawn by him in that same epistle: « In this City ( he says ) we have been living, for the last twenty-seven years, encompassed by the swords of the Longobards ». — « We are continually pierced (*confodimur*) by the swords of the enemy, but still worse harassed by the frequent dangers that threaten us from the sedition of the troops » ( lib. I, *ep.* 3 ). After release from these evils, he exerted himself to provision the City, and generously to procure stores of grain from his patrimonies. At this time there were 3000 nuns in the convents of Rome, and all reduced to destitution by the Longobardic invasion, their lands, now laid waste, no more yielding sustenance. Gregory undertook to provide for them all, assigning the annual amount of 80 lbs of gold from the church-treasury for these poor women, to whose pious and sanctified life he bears witness ( lib. VI, *ep.* 23 ). The peace secured through his efforts was broken, after but a brief interval, and through the fault of the Exarch, who seized Perugia, besides other towns now under Longobardic government, thus violating the engagements made by treaty. Agilulph, notwithstanding his Catholic profession, now marched against Rome; and the dismal scenes of devastation and outrage were again enacted on the Campagna, where, as he looked down from the walls, the bene-

volent pontiff could see the miseries of the defenceless peasantry led away captives and slaves with hands bound behind their backs. But the Longobard, more reasonable and loyal than Exarch or Emperor, at last offered to make a separate peace with Rome, under the sole ratification of the pontiff; and Gregory, to save a people now reduced almost to the extremities of famine, consented to sign the treaty without waiting for sanction either from Ravenna or Constantinople—a transaction that strikingly shows how far a virtual sovereignty was now exercised by, forced indeed, through public gratitude and respect, upon the Papacy. Still, however, acting like a loyal subject, Gregory applied to the Emperor for retrospective approval to this important step; and the characteristic answer of Mauritius, not only condemning, but actually insulting the venerable Pastor on account of what he had done, showed at once his narrowness of mind and ignorance of Italian circumstances. The little man in the trappings of royalty disliked, perhaps feared, the great man in the simple garb of the monastic bishop. As to the latter, his apostolic zeal is affectingly evident at this juncture. He had commenced a series of sermons on Ezechiel, when intelligence came of the approach of the invading army, and, though all care for the public welfare now devolved on him, would not discontinue till, after delivering the 22nd of those extant homilies, he found it materially impossible to give his time to preaching amidst the many claims urged by imminent dangers. At this crisis the holy man proved a true patriot—and well is it observed, in reference to his conduct, by Tommaseo, that no Saint ever co-operated for the betrayal of his country, nor ever was in league against a nation's freedom! Writing to the bishops of those Italian cities still under Greek rule, he enjoined them to see that none should be exempt from the duty of keeping guard on the walls (amidst present dangers); that priests and monks, as well as laymen, should in this lend their services as required by the civic magistrates for the common cause.



The disastrous circumstances amidst which Gregory occupied the See did not allow him to prove a founder, or restorer, in the range of public works. A baldacchino, with columns of solid silver, for the high altar of St. Peter's, is the only donation from him to any church of which we find mention in the various catalogues supplied.

The contemporary writer cited by the Bollandists mentions indeed a similar gift of a silver baldacchino to St. Paul's, lamps, and other objects presented to different churches; and, every year of this pontificate, was some restoration of roofs (no doubt woodwork) to the basilicas. In the atrium of his monastery Gregory caused his own portrait to be painted in full length, together with the figures of his father and his saintly mother, and St. Peter at the centre of this group, long since destroyed but preserved in engraving by Baronius, and described in the life of this Pontiff by Johannes Deaconus. One public improvement desired, but (it seems) not accomplished, nor possible within the means at his disposal, was a restoration of the Aqueducts, for which object he repeatedly wrote to his Nuncio at Ravenna, and directed him to intercede with the « Praefect of Italy ». It appears indeed that a « Count of the Aqueducts », reviving the title and office of the ancient superintendence over such works, was nominated by the Exarch for carrying out such undertaking as the Pontiff urged, but without any noticeable result; and Gregory describes (A. D. 602) the condition of Rome's imperial aqueducts, threatened with total and speedy decay unless saved by the care of those responsible: *nisi major sollicitudo fuerit inter paucum tempus omnia depercant*.

No Pope has left such numerous writings as St. Gregory, whose extant letters number 840; whose *Cura Pastoralis* was long the especial norma of instructions on the duties of the priesthood; and many of whose hymns, breathing fervent and appropriately-expressed piety, are still in use—as those beginning with the lines: *Primo dierum omnium, – Nocte surgentes vigilemus omnes – Ecce jam noctis tenuatur umbra –*

*Clarum decus jejunii* ? *Audi benigne Conditor* — *Magno salutis gaudio* — *Rex Christe factor omnium* — *Jam Christus astra ascenderat*. But in wide-spread popularity his « Dialogues » have surpassed all his other works ; their renown soon extending over Eastern as well as Western Christendom , translated into many languages , into Arabic about the end of the VIII century , into Saxon by our King Alfred. Benedictine editors have ascribed to them the conversion of the Longobardic nation. Of contents chiefly anecdotal , in the greater part they revolve on miracles ascribed to illustrious Saints , especially St. Benedict , whose praises one of the four books this work is divided into , exclusively sets forth. With much that is edifying and beautiful , much that is terrific or picturesquely marvellous—as the demon-haunted house at Corinth , the phantom-council of Apollo and the evil Spirits in the ruined temple at Fondi , the vision of the punishment of Theodoric , hurled into the infernal regions through the volcano's mouth at Lipari , as seen by a holy hermit , — there are in this volume not few details to excite a smile ; and others that seem intended for no purpose but to exalt the honours of the monastic state. When we call to mind the high and pure character of the writer , the saintly example of constant energetic self-devotion in his life , these Dialogues seem below that standard of moral greatness ; and we cannot read them without painful consciousness of decline from that sublime reflex of Christian faith and practice presented in the earlier literature of the Church , between whose best products and these discourses of St. Gregory there is , indeed , a wide interval. The amazing catalogue of miracles is advanced without anything like inquiry or proof ; and the startling prominence of Demonology—the belief in direct and visible diabolic agency ; the eager trust in saintly intercession , and profound veneration for Relics (1) ; the readiness to believe in such appa-

(1) The usage of sending as a precious gift to the highly favoured of Rome filings from the chains of St. Peter set in golden keys, had

ritions as serve to make manifest the state of the dead ; also the reliance on prayer and on the Eucharistic sacrifice for the relief of souls in Purgatory, are details that here serve to evince the dominant religious feeling of the VI century. St. Gregory has been well defended from the gratuitous imputation ( advanced in *his praise* by John of Salisbury, a writer of the XII century ) of having destroyed by fire the Palatine library from fear of the corrupting influence of Heathen literature. That he forbade the study of that literature to ecclesiastics, is certain. His own ignorance of the Greek language, notwithstanding long residence at Constantinople, is avowed by him ( Ep. 29, lib. VI ) ; and a curious evidence of the low state of culture at that city is the assertion, in one of his letters, that not a single person could there be found capable of translating from Greek into Latin, or *vice versa*.

One of the legends relating to this pontiff, and full of significance, is given in the « *Legenda Aurea* » : — Whilst walking one day in the Forum of Trajan, he was meditating on an anecdote of that Emperor having turned back, when at the head of his legions on his way to battle, to render justice to a poor widow, who flung herself at his horse's feet, demanding vengeance for the innocent blood of her child, slain by the Emperor's own son. It seemed to Gregory that the soul of a prince so good could not be for ever lost, Pagan though he was ; and he prayed for him, till a voice declared Trajan to have been saved through his intercession. This story of Imperial justice is introduced by Dante in the *Purgatorio* ; and the Poet's belief is evinced by his placing the soul of Trajan, between David and Hezekiah, among the blessed ( *Paradiso XX* ). The feeling of the *later Church* is illustrated by this idea of the salvation of a Pagan through intercession

already become prevalent, and was often practised by St. Gregory, who, in a letter written to one recipient of such a donation, extols the miraculous virtues of the consecrated key : « *super aegros multis solet miraculis coruscare* ».

at the altar, which Art as well as Poetry has turned to account, but grave authorities unite in totally rejecting — St. John Damascene, and, after him, John « Deaconus », being the unreliable chroniclers who first circulated it. Some of the other legends related by Gregory himself are illustrated among the ancient paintings recently found in the subterranean church of St. Clement at Rome.

How the mission for the converting of Britain was suggested to Gregory, is a well-known tale: it was whilst yet but a Deacon that his interest was excited in the fair young Saxons exposed to sale on the Forum, asking as to whose country, and learning they were « Angli », he rejoined, « Not Angli but Angels, if they were Christians » (*Non Angli sed Angeli, si fuerint Christiani*); or, according to other version: « Well are they so named, for they have angelic semblance, and such should be co-heirs with the Angels in Heaven » (1). Like the man of practical benevolence, he determined

(1) St. Gregory's benevolent play on words may be best remembered as paraphrased in Wordsworth's sonnet, among that series where the story of the Anglo Saxon conversion is embalmed in immortal verse:

ANGLI by name; and not an Angel waves  
His wing who could seem lovelier in man's eye  
Than they appear to holy Gregory;  
Who, having learnt that name, salvation craves  
For Them and for their Land. The earnest Sire,  
His questions urging, feels, in slender ties  
Of chiming sound, commanding sympathies;  
DE-IRIANS — he would save them from God's Ire;  
Subjects of Saxon ÆLLA — they shall sing  
Glad Halle-lujahs to the eternal King!

And I may take the opportunity to offer merited praise to the fine treatment of this scene on the Forum, with a background of classic monuments in the supposable state of their incipient ruin, in a picture by M. Platner, executed at Rome, 1865, and purchased by Mr. Monteith of Carstairs.



at once to act on the resolution now formed, and to do the good work himself: having obtained the reluctant consent of the Pope, he set out with some monks of the St. Andrew cloisters, but was soon overtaken and obliged to return, in consequence of a demonstration which had been yielded to. On his way to officiate at St. Peter's, the Pope (it is not certain whether Benedict or Pelagius) was met by crowds of citizens who cried out: « What hast thou done, Apostolic Father? Thou hast offended St. Peter, and ruined Rome! The blessed Gregory has been banished, not sent away by thee! » So did the Romans of those days remonstrate and make their wishes known to their spiritual chief! nor, in this case, in vain; for the fatherly pontiff at once sent messengers to bring back their much-loved Deacon, who was found reposing at noon-day in a field, and reading to his monks from one of the sacred books, on which a locust had just alighted, suggesting to Gregory an omen from its name « locusta » — *loco sta* — in the sense that there the journey was to be arrested! — so ready a wit had the Saint! Not many years afterwards, Gregory, now become Pope, charged Augustine, with other monks of St. Andrew's, to undertake what he had been thwarted in accomplishing, but had never forgotten; and the historic results are sufficiently known. « The King of the Saxons (says Lingard) received them (the monks) under an oak in an open field, at the suggestion of his priests, who had told him that in such a situation the spells of foreign magicians would lose their influence. At the appointed time Augustine was introduced to the King. Before him was borne a silver cross and a banner representing the Redeemer; behind him his companions walked in procession; and the air resounded with the anthems they sung in alternate choirs». Not at this epoch was it that Christianity had first reached those shores. The original British Church is said to have been founded in the second century; as we are told by venerable Bede that « Lucius, king of the Britons, sent a letter to the

Pope (Eleutherius, 477-'94) entreating him to give orders that instruction might be supplied for teaching and converting him to the Christian faith; which request was soon satisfied; and the Britons preserved incorrupt and entire the faith they had received, in peace and concord, till the time of the Emperor Diocletian » — from which words we may conclude that the Diocletian persecution almost swept away that heavenly plant from British ground. Ethelbert, the king to whom the new missionaries first addressed themselves, could not have been altogether ignorant of their doctrines, his wife Bertha, daughter of the Frankish king Charibert, being already a Christian, openly practising her religion, and attended by her chaplain who officiated at the court—one of the many instances of royal conversion on the female prior to that on the male side.

Before the opening of the VI century the Scots as well as Irish had become Christians; and the first bishop of the Caledonian church, Palladius, was sent to that nation by Celestinus I; the Picts, then settled in the southern part of their country, having been converted partially by Ninias, a missionary from Rome, and for the rest by St. Columban, from Ireland. The primitive British Church had been driven by persecution to the Cambrian mountains, its last refuge, whilst the Saxon conquerors were yet in the night of Paganism. St. Augustine's mission was undertaken in 596, but not till a year later did his company of about forty persons, several French priests having joined the Italian monks on their journey, arrive at their destination. The King of Kent listened favourably to their preaching, and gave them full liberty in their sacred enterprise, long before his own conversion, which took place in the year 600; and on the first Christmas after the Cross had been borne with holy symbolism and chanted prayer into Canterbury, more than 40,000 Saxons were baptized. After Augustine had become Primate and Archbishop of the new Church, Gregory sent him the

pallium, with ample store of sacred vessels and vestments, tapestries, altar-hangings, missals with musical notes, and other religious books, besides holy Relics.

He did not require the Pagan temples in that island to be destroyed, but dedicated to the true worship; and had the prudent liberality to allow even the ancient feasts to be retained, in the banquets for which the people assembled under tents of green boughs round those temples; now to be purified from all association with idolatry, and connected henceforth with the anniversaries of Martyrs or of church-dedications. This Pontiff's apostolic estimate of his own prerogatives might be recommended to the consideration of those who maintain certain theories now in vogue respecting the Papacy. In answer to the demand of Augustine as to the ritual observances of the Anglo Saxon church, he enjoined that, without exclusively following the example of Rome, he should pass in review the practice of all churches, and choose for himself what he deemed appropriate or suited to edify the new-born Christian flock of that island!

A rigorous reformer, or rather restorer, of discipline did Gregory prove; and his efforts with such aim serve to indicate the then disordered conditions of the Church, naturally deteriorated by the shocks of public vicissitude. There were then vagabond monks who roamed about, probably trading on popular credulity, all of whom he ordered to be brought back and confined to their cloisters. There were nuns who used to leave their convents, to litigate before public tribunals; and he reproved an Archbishop for permitting such things. It is evident from his interposition in monastic affairs that he neither contemplated, nor would have sanctioned, the system of Mendicant Orders, seeing he prescribed that no new monastery should be opened without secured means for its permanent support. In his resolute opposition to Simony he prohibited all payment for such special religious services as giving the veil to nuns, consecrating bishops, the bestowal of the pallium upon archbishops (there-

fore cutting off a source of revenue to himself and his successors); for the rites of sepulture, and even for burial ground. In the cloister also he required that the novice should be received gratuitously; and that the monk, once admitted to any higher office in the Church, should have no farther rights or influence in the monastery he had quitted. Benignant as was his temper, he allowed the infliction of public penance (not yet in disuse), even by the scourge, and on one occasion commanded it, in the case of a Neapolitan deacon, who had grossly calumniated another cleric of his own church. As to his own political position, it is evident that this Pontiff thoroughly and loyally accepted the character of a subject to the Greek Emperor, and acted on the view that the reigning power *must* be acknowledged and obeyed in all temporal matters by the Church, without reference to the title on which that power may rest, or the means by which it may have attained its supreme place. His procedure in this respect indeed implies the simple acceptance of the accomplished fact, in the political world, as the sole line marked out for ecclesiastic action; and hence does he address the blood-stained usurper Phocas, who obtained the Byzantine crown by treason and regicide, with the same unhesitating loyalty as his predecessor and victim, Mauritius, who had long kept up amicable correspondence with the Roman See and with Gregory himself. The style adopted by this Pontiff in dating documents speaks for itself: *Imperante Domine Nostro — piissimo Augusto, — post Consulatum ejusdem Domini Nostri*, &c. It remains to be decided whether his expressions do, or do not, bear the deeper meaning that, by implication, reprobates even the principle which allows the unitedly-assumed powers, temporal and spiritual, in the same chief.

Most remarkable in the writings of St. Gregory are his utterances in respect to the powers with which was invested the office held by himself, and to the claims of absolute supremacy by any prelate whomsoever in the Church. He not only disclaimed the title of Oecumenical (or universal) Bish-



op, and condemned the Byzantine patriarch for assuming it, but protested strongly against the attempt to secure such pre-eminent rank on the part of any other. It is evident indeed that his denunciation is directed rather against a principle than a fact in this question; and though he remembers that the offensive title had been given to St. Leo I by the Council of Chalcedon, he declares that neither that Pope nor any other of his predecessors had ever accepted, or pretended to it. There seems indeed a kind of foreboding, an idea repellent of some threatened danger to the Apostolic constitution of the Church in his frequent recurrence to this topic, and reiterated protest against what seemed to his humble and truly pious mind a species of apostasy, a fruit of diabolic temptation, to which whosoever should yield, that person, misled by unholy ambition, might be considered the fore-runner of Antichrist! — *in isto solo vocabulo consentire est fidem perdere* (lib. IV, ep. 39); *quisquis se universalem Sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat, in electione sua Antichristum praecurrat, quia superbiendo se aliis anteponit* (lib. VII, ep. 33). He considered that the arrogating of such rank by any one among the Hierarchy, would involve the usurpation from the rest of powers shared alike by all the successors of the Apostles; and enjoins the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria never to give that name, « Universal Bishop » to *him*, lest they should detract from the honours held by themselves in Sees so illustrious (V, 43).

Yet, on the other hand, we find this Saint acting from the point of view of a primacy vested in his own office, and justifying his interposition in the affairs of other bishoprics where questions of principle or sacred obligation were at stake. He addresses to all the Italian bishops the command that they should exert themselves by every persuasive means to induce the Arian Longobards to allow the Catholic baptism of their children, at least when in danger of death; and even the Byzantine Prelate submits to his requirement in a case where he had evidently right on his side. The doctrine of

St. Peter's supremacy is laid down in the distinctest terms by Gregory, with adducing of all the texts it is common to hear at this day cited in its support. How are we to reconcile this apparent discordance between the theory and practice of one so pure, so superior to worldliness of spirit? Perhaps the best solution of the problem is to be found in his own words, where, addressing at the same time the two great Prelates of the East, he defines that those Sees, Antioch and Alexandria, being, alike with the Roman, of foundation due to St. Peter, *alike* inherited the prerogatives of the chief Apostle; implying, in fact, that the Catholic Church was under a triple supremacy, shared by three Pontiffs, the equal successors of St. Peter (1). In another significant passage he observes: « Where is question of offence by a Bishop, then all should be subject to it; (the Roman See); when no offence exists, then all bishops, according to the law of humility, are equal ».

The freedom of episcopal election—that great palladium of religious liberties and bond of concord between pastors and flocks, in regard to which the Church's primitive constitution has been so widely departed from — was respected by Gregory with conscientious earnestness; and even those Italian and Sicilian Sees more immediately dependant on Rome were left to perfectly free action when the choice of

(1) « Itaque cum multi sint Apostoli, pro ipso tamen principatu sola Apostolorum principis sedes in auctoritate convaluit, quae in tribus locis unius est. Ipse enim sublimavit Sedem in qua etiam quiescere et praesentem vitam finire dignatus est. Ipse decoravit Sedem in qua Evangelistam discipulum misit (i. e. Alexándria). Ipse firmavit Sedem in qua septem annis, quamvis discessurus, sedit (Antioch). Cum ergo unius atque una est Sedes, cui ex auctoritate divina tres nunc Episcopi praesident, quidque ego de vobis boni audio, hoc mihi imputo » (l. VII, ep. 40). Writing to these Prelates, the Bishop of Rome styles them « Your Holiness », or « Your Beatitude », whilst « Your Fraternity » is his common phrase for other bishops.

their bishops had to be determined. Writing to the people of Milan, this genuine successor of the Apostles congratulates them for the unanimity with which *they* had elected and published a new pastor to their metropolitan See. And to those of Rimini he recommends that they should seek speedily to agree among *themselves* for the nomination to a similar vacancy. The See of Syracuse having become vacant, he wrote to a deacon of that city (V, 17), and, after mentioning that he was aware the majority of votes had already almost determined in favour of a certain presbyter, adds that, if it were desired to consult his own wishes, he might privately intimate his persuasion that the archdeacon of Catania was the worthiest subject on whom the Syracusans could fix their choice, and, if it were possible that his election might take place (*si fieri potest ut eligatur*), the result, he was sure, would perfectly satisfy them. In such manner did the Papacy then interpose in the election of bishops!

It is interesting to pass through the cycle of the ritual year under the guidance of St. Gregory, and observe how far the majestic and splendid temple of Latin worship owes its forms, its enchantments and beauties to his creative mind. By him were the Holy Week and the Christmas celebrations developed into nearly their present completeness; and the imagery of symbolism had, before this time, assumed its place in the sanctuary with language of silent eloquence almost as to this day addressing the worshipper. On Holy Thursday (to cite examples) was the blessing of the sacred oils, the communion of priests and laity (in but one kind) at the hand of the officiating bishop, and the reservation of the Eucharist for the next day, when was to be no consecration; on Good Friday, the adoration of the Cross to the thrilling chant, *Ecce lignum crucis*, and the « Mass of the Presanctified »; on Easter-eve, the blessing of the Font, and Baptism, not as now of adults, but of infants, the illuminating of the church during the chant of the Litanies, and the first Mass of the Resurrection, contemplated as taking place

at midnight. What we miss is the solemn procession of the Host, on the Thursday and Friday, to and from the illuminated « Sepulchre »; in its essentials indeed observed at this early period, but in form quite simple, the *Sacramentarium* ordering that the holy Eucharist, reserved in one kind, should be brought to the altar from the sacristy, or other suitable place, by two priests and two subdeacons, without indication of that processional pomp which, as now presented, seems so strikingly to blend the triumphal with the funereal character—all the majesty of the Church's sorrow for her crucified Lord! Also is the beautiful formula for the blessing of the Paschal Candle wanting to this ancient ritual; for though the observance had been earlier introduced in the Roman and other churches, it had fallen into desuetude, from what date is uncertain, till restored by Pope Theodore in the VII century. Except that « Litany of all Saints » still heard (but here much briefer) on Holy Saturday, I find no invocations in this office-book that are not directly addressed to Deity; no worship of the creature; though the *idea* of effectual intercession by the saints is frequently apparent. The Benedictine editors acknowledge that the office for the Assumption cannot be ascribed to Gregory, though they assume it to be still more ancient. That for SS. Peter and Paul implies the view that both alike were Vicars of Christ, — co-equal rulers in the Church — *quos operis tui Vicarios eidem contulisti praeesse Pastores*. It is directed that the communion and anointing of the sick should be repeated, if the emergency required, on seven days successively. Some of the forms of blessing throw light on singular usages of the time, as, for instance, that for the first shaving of the adolescent beard — probably in the case of young clerics, on whom the operation might have been performed in sacristies or cloisters?

St. Gregory passed to his immortal reward after less than fourteen years in the pontificate (12th March 604); after overwhelming cares, superadded to continual bodily infirmities, had made him feel and often complain of the burden



of purely mundane duties now devolving on St. Peter's successor. If tired of life, he was never certainly tired of work; and the epitaph once on his tomb well records, in quaintly conceived verse, his pre-eminent services:

Implicbatque actu quidque sermone docebat:  
 Esset ut exemplum, mystica verba loquens.  
 Anglos ad Christum convertit mente benigna,  
 Sic fidei acquirens agnima genii nova.  
 Hisque Dei consul factus laetare triumphis,  
 Nunc mercedem operum jam sine fine tenes.

Who would not regard with veneration the relics of such a man as St. Gregory? And the church dedicate to him, on the site of his house and monastery, now left in possession of so little belonging to its antique original, contains memorials whose authenticity cannot be questioned. A lateral chapel (gilt and decorated in bad taste) marks the spot where the Saint frequently spent the night on no other couch than a slab of marble, still seen behind a grating. Here also is the marble chair, his episcopal throne, now so worn that the figures of fabulous animals, carved on it, can scarcely be traced. In the contiguous aisle is an altar, below a modern picture of St. Gregory, with marble reliefs of the XV century, illustrating his story, or rather legend, in three groups: the central representing a vision above the altar whilst he is celebrating, vouchsafed to dispel the scepticism of one who had doubted the Real Presence; the lateral reliefs representing the liberation of souls from Purgatory through his intercessions at an altar, here like a narrow reading-desk rather than the magnificent elevations in modern churches; the soul being seen below in the flames of Purgatory, and above ascending to Beatitude—the allusion, no doubt, to the legend of the salvation of Trajan.

Off the left aisle of the same church is entered a chapel, modernized in 1600 by the architect Maderno, where in a deep niche, within the thickness of the walls, is seen an

ancient fresco of the Virgin and Child, said to have *spoken* to St. Gregory,—one of those favourite traditions attaching to so many paintings and Crucifixes in Rome! In one of three chapels quite apart from the church (in their present state rebuilt by order of Cardinal Baronius, completed 1608) is a seated statue of the Pontiff, in full Papal robes and tiara, by Cordieri, directed in this work by Buonarotti, evidently conforming to the tradition of the Saint's actual appearance—tall, robust, inclined to corpulence, of full face and dark hair, without beard (1). In the midst stands the identical table at which he used to feed twelve poor men every day; and around the walls are several mediocre frescoes, illustrating acts in his life; one being the banquet given to those pauper guests, at which appears a thirteenth, who proved to be an Angel—or, according to one version of the legend, the Redeemer Himself! « I am the poor man thou didst formerly relieve; but by name is the Wonderful, and through me thou shalt obtain whatever thou askest from God » — this announcement, in which the mysterious being is said to have addressed him, alluding to the beggar, who had thrice applied for alms, and as the charitable Saint had at last nothing left to bestow, received from him a silver porringer his mother used every day to send with a mess of food to her son in his monastery. Another of these chapels contains a statue, by the same Cordieri, of that pious matron, an ex-

(1) « St. Gregory presented to this Monastery his own portrait with those of his father and mother, which were still in existence 300 years after his death; and the portrait of himself probably furnished that peculiar type of physiognomy we trace in all the best representations of him ». (Mrs. Jameson, « *Sacred and Legendary Art* »). Since the XIV century the figure of this Pontiff has become one of the grouping obligatory, so to say, in paintings for the church, that of the Four Latin Doctors, where he is known by his Papal vestments, usually with the tiara (never worn by him), and the Dove at his ear, implying the inspiration he certainly would never have claimed.

pressive and venerable figure, said to be taken from the genuine likeness of her once in the St. Andrew cloisters.

Close to the ill-modernized church on the Coelian is a ruin we may regard as the identical monastery founded in his paternal mansion by this Pontiff, which fell into decay after the lapse of but one century from his death; was soon afterwards restored by Gregory II, but again destined to ruin and oblivion, since what precise period is unknown. Its extant portion consists of the apse-like termination of a hall in brickwork (perhaps the chapter-house) — connected with a line of more vaguely-marked ruins along the ascent of the quiet road (*Clivus Scauri*) between *S. Gregorio* and *SS. Giovanni e Paolo*. The couch on which the good Pope used to recline, as his infirmities obliged him to do, whilst giving lessons in vocal music to the young clerics, was reverentially preserved at the Lateran till the time of Johannes Diaconus. We have to regret its disappearance. At *SS. Nereo ed Achilleo* the whole of one of his homilies is chiselled on the back of the same marble throne from which he delivered it—so brief were those earnest but quiet, unostentatious sermons in which a Pope addressed his people, at least once a week, during those times when Apostolic practice still prevailed—in this province how unlike the obligatory spun-out rhetoric of the modern Italian pulpit! St. Gregory's are the sermons of the priest who thinks nothing about self, absorbed in his subject.

The apparition above the Castle of S. Angelo (disproved by the silence of all writers nearest to the period who mention the pestilence and procession of the litanies) was not perhaps even imagined till somewhat later than this pontificate. But in the Story of Legend, this first supposed vision of the Archangel Michael with even any pretence to historic or palpable character, deserves notice. That which gave rise to the sanctuary and place of pilgrimage on Mount Gargano, rests merely on a dream, except in details that can be accounted for without supernaturalism. A proprietor of Siponte

(now Manfredonia), near that mountain, found that one of his oxen had strayed from the herd to the entrance of a cavern near the summit. He ordered a servant to shoot the poor beast; but the arrow rebounded, so as to slay the man instead of the ox. The cavern was explored, and in it three altars, with a spring of pure water gushing near, astonished the beholders; inferring some sacred mystery from which, the proprietor made report to the Bishop of Siponte, who, in order to obtain divine light, fasted and prayed for three days, at the end of which time he beheld in a dream the Archangel Michael, and learnt that that cavern was consecrated to him, and ought ever to be revered by the faithful in its association with their angelic Guardian (1). Perhaps the similar legends attaching to other high mountains had origin in the natural awe, in the sense of a Presence and a Power, felt amid the solitudes of majestic Nature.

At the present religious crisis of Italy, amidst the too evident alienation from the Church and deep-seated animosities against the Papacy, the example of St. Gregory seems more than ever entitled to regard. It is scarcely more striking as a personification of the virtues suitable to such high dignity, than as a witness to the pure ideal of what that dignity ought to be. Such a spectacle of energies tempered by humility, simple-minded devotedness, detachment from worldly ambition, and rational claims for ecclesiastic prerogative, shows to us the Papacy in its best aspect, and suggests the hope of what it may again become by return to its worthier antecedents—an issue devoutly to be desired by those convinced of the deep injury to religious interests which has resulted, among Italians at least, from the discredit and comparative impotency into which Catholicism has fallen.

Within this period that comprises the evening and morning of two stormy centuries, we cannot expect to find many

(1) Represented in an indifferent and much faded fresco, referred to the school of Giotto, at S. Croce, Florence.



traces of Man's history on monuments or in art-forms. It is indeed the great cataclysm, the final ruin of antique Civilization we have now to contemplate—a leading fact of the time to which St. Gregory is a principal witness. No writer has left such mournful notices of the decay and desolation into which Rome and Italy had fallen. « No longer (he says) do we find inhabitants in the country, and scarce any population even in the towns ». Alluding to the prediction he himself recorded as uttered by St. Benedict, that Rome should be ruined, not by foreign invaders, but by the shocks of Nature, he observes; « the mysteries of this prophecy are now brought into clear light before us; for in this City we have seen walls overthrown, houses levelled, churches destroyed by the whirlwind, and the edifices worn out by old age fall into final decay under accumulating ruins » (*Dialog.* lib. II). His contemporary biographer describes the inundation, shortly before he became Pope, when the Tiber's turbid waters flowed over the greater part of the civic regions, « so that many walls of antique edifices were thrown down ». It is certain that St. Gregory neither burnt libraries nor demolished ancient buildings—acts beyond the competency of Popes subject to the Greek Emperors; but he discouraged the pursuits of classic literature, and no doubt confirmed the increasing estrangement of the Christian mind from all that pertained to the Pagan Past. Such a line of policy had its reasons in the then circumstances of the western world, and can scarcely be blamed in an ecclesiastical chief.

The Church had still to fight against lingering Paganism, if not in cities, yet among rustics and villagers, or in remote islands. Even at Terracina, a short day's journey from Rome, superstition was so far rampant that, in writing to its bishop, Gregory had to express his horror at learning that idolatrous worship was paid in that diocese to trees (lib. VIII, ep. 48).

In Sardinia, as he reports (lib. V, ep. 41), those who still sacrificed to idols were very numerous; and the judge ap-

pointed by the Exarch was in the habit of granting for money the license to such practices! happily, however, to a degree put down by the efforts of an Italian bishop whom Gregory had sent on that mission to a nominally Christian island. The total neglect for classic monuments may be considered to have set in, at Rome, to continue its long-unimpeded course from this period; and henceforth no antique temple had a chance of being respected or left intact save when dedication to Christian worship was its lot. Fabricius (in *Graev. Antiq. Rom.* T. III) enumerates fifty-eight churches at Rome occupying the sites of Pagan fanes. Even private proprietors were now at liberty to take down and dispose of such among ancient ruins as stood in their demesnes; as we read was done by a Roman lady, who made a present to Justinian of several columns in her gardens on the Quirinal Hill, destining them for the adornment of the new St. Sophia Basilica. We may date the opening of the Mediaeval period in History from this pontificate; and amidst the tumults and shocks, necessary perhaps for the final overthrow of Heathenism with all its influences, rises the life of a higher principle, like heavenly harmonies above jarring discords (1).

(1) The Bollandists give the sole contemporary records of St. Gregory, which, besides his own writings and the « *Historia Francorum* » of Gregory of Tours, can be relied on. See also Maimbourg, « *Pontificat de St. Grégoire le Grand* »; Denina, « *Rivoluzioni d'Italia* », Gregorovius « *Geschichte d. Stadt Rom.* » (a writer my obligations to whom cannot be too emphatically acknowledged); Dyer « *History of the City of Rome* »; and, for just estimate of St. Gregory and his services, Cantù, « *Storia Universale* »; Tommaseo, « *Rome et le Monde* ». The startling examples of scandal and outrage in sacred places, on record to the disgrace of this period, are given by Gregory of Tours, (« *Hist. Franc.* » lib. IX, 45, 40), but cannot, I believe, be charged against the Italian Church or cloisters.

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## CHRONOLOGY OF MONUMENTS.

RAVENNA: St. Theodore, a vast monastery founded by a private citizen contiguous to a church of the same name, afterwards called S. Spirito, 590.

NAPLES: Monasteries and churches of St. Pantaleo and St. Festus, 596: St. Fortunata, called also *Stefania*, built by Bishop Stephen, 596: church and monastery of St. Martin, extramural, 599. Earlier in this century, churches of St. Stephen, St. Euphemia, S. Laurence; and, in 566, St. John Baptist, all of the Roman type, but no longer extant, or so altered that the antique can no longer be traced. First church at Naples, a basilica founded by Constantine; later cathedral, St. Restituta, founded 362, but no trace of its original architecture left; most ancient extant church, according to legend, S. Pietro ad Aram, with a chapel in which St. Peter is said to have baptized St. Asprenus, first Bishop of this See.

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## X.

### **The Monuments of Ravenna.**

THE history of Ravenna, the last stronghold of declining Empire, the capital of the Italo-Gothic Kingdom, the seat of the feeble but tyrannic Exarchate, long favoured by the munificence of Justinian and his orthodox successors, and eventually handed over to the Papacy to become one of the most precious jewels in the Tiara, is fraught with romantic incident, and eventful vicissitude. Her ecclesiastical annals alone suffice for an interesting chapter in Italian story; and her religious monuments are, of their description, unique, less impaired by modern interferences than those of Rome; whilst supplying the fullest illustration of the ideas and genius that animated sacred art in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Christianity was introduced here by S. Apollinaris, who is represented by legend as the personal friend and disciple of St. Peter, sent by that Apostle from Rome to found this illustrious Church on the Adriatic; and surviving through an ordeal of multiform persecutions to govern his missionary diocese for twenty-nine years, after which period he suffered martyrdom, A. D. 74, under Vespasian. An old chronicle describes him as baptizing his converts in the sea, and celebrating mass in a cottage on the shore, the first place of Christian worship here provided; and, descending to a date so much later as the beginning of the fifth century, we read, in the Lives of the Ravenna Archbishops by Agnellus, that



till S. Ursus (elected about 400) built the first regular church dedicated under the name « Anastasis », their flock had no other temples than cottages, worshipping « in tuguriis », as the writer says (1). Whilst Ravenna was the imperial residence, during the period most disastrous for the Western Empire, Honorius, Valentinian III, and Galla Placidia did much for this city in the way of religious foundations and embellishments. The Arian Theodoric was also a benefactor to his capital, and, judged by the light of his time, an intelligent autocrat, who promoted civilization at this centre. After the government of the Greek Exarchs had existed 185 years (2), the last of those viceregal officers was driven from hence (A.D. 754) by Astolphus, the Longobard king; and Ravenna became, for but a short period indeed, the new capital of that foreign people. Soon occurred those events so important to the temporal interests of the Papacy; the donation of Pepin, comprising, in liberal concession to Rome (755), the whole of the province which now began to be designated « Romagna »; after which changes the government of Ravenna was administered by her prelates in the name of, and in subjection to, the Popes (though some of them indeed were loath to submit to such yoke); (3) but about the time that other Italian cities

(1) In this respect art-historians differ from the chronicler, assigning about the date 380 to the origin of the first architectonic cathedral at Ravenna. (Ricci, *Storia dell'Architettura in Italia*).

(2) According to some historians, 499 years.

(3) Long after the Greek Exarchate had ceased as a political administration, the Romagna province retained the same name, and the Ravenna bishopric affected the right to succeed to the Byzantine government over this city and territory. Her prelates, inspired perhaps by the recent example of the Popes, made some attempt to obtain temporal power from Charlemagne over the Marches of Ancona. But it was by the sole authority of a Pope, appealed to with success, that the Frankish king could carry away marbles and art-works from Ravenna for enriching his new residence and basilica at Aix-la-Chapelle—a fatal precedent!

freed themselves from aristocratic or imperial dominion, Ravenna also cast off the authority of her mitred rulers, and constituted her new government on republican principles, with a general council of 250, and a special council of 70 citizens. In 1218 one of the powerful Traversari family disturbed this order of things by raising himself to the rank of Duke of Ravenna, but without otherwise setting aside the institutions of his native city, which, in 1240, fell under the power of the Emperor Frederick II, who did not scruple to sacrifice her liberties by consigning her, eight years afterwards, to the troops of Pope Innocent IV, thenceforth to be governed by a Papal officer with the title Count, or Rector, of Romagna. But this new political phase was brought to a term, about 1300, by the ascendant Polenta family, who made themselves lords of Ravenna, as they continued to be till 1440, when, having become odious to the citizens, their usurpation was overthrown, and the Romagna province spontaneously placed itself under Venice. Till 1509 that Republic comprised this acquisition within its territories; then ceded it to the Papacy; and, though in 1527 the Venetians again occupied Ravenna in order to make efficient stand against the mercenary armies of Charles V., three years later they once more handed her over to Rome by the treaty of Bologna. We must infer that Ravenna rapidly declined under Papal sway; for her depressed condition in the XI century is described as well nigh to that of ruin in the Comment on Dante by Benvenuto da Imola: « now so languid and exhausted, that in her decrepitude, near to her fall, she has lost all her vital forces ». In that same century, however, A. D. 1096, was made one addition to her sacred monuments in the extramural church *S. Maria Portafuori*, built in fulfilment of a vow, made in peril at sea, by the Beato Pietro degli Onesti, styled « il peccatore ». The annexation of this city and province to the Italian kingdom is an event of recent history well known, and accomplished with scarce a shadow of resistance on behalf of the government overthrown.

The chronicle by Agnellus (in Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Script.*) extends from A.D. 50 to 841, finished by the writer, himself prelate of this see, about 880; being indeed a precious document of those ages: minute, careful in detail, and distinguished by the earnestness of a fresh and simple nature. Not only deeds and virtues suitable to their station, but the outward looks of the holy men are reported: one, we are told, having been *speciosus forma*, another *hilaris vultu*; one *magnus praedicator*, another *pater pauperum*; while others are recorded to have preached every day, or given a daily banquet, like S. Gregory I, to poor pilgrims, etc. We read nothing of interposition from Rome in the appointment of these prelates till the time of John Angeloptes (so called from the vision of angels vouchsafed to him), who, occupying this see from 405 to 439, first received the pallium from a Pope—the chronicle indeed says, from Valentinian III, though we must infer that it was through the imperial influence at Rome that the archiepiscopal symbol was actually obtained; and Muratori concludes that the next in succession, Peter Chrysologus, was first to exercise the authority of Metropolitan, and to receive consecration in person from the Pope. The episode of the meeting between the same John Angeloptes and Attila, and the spiritual appeals by which the fury of the Huns was averted from this city, their troops being induced to traverse it without damage to life or property, presents one of the noblest instances of the righteous ascendancy won by sacerdotal dignitaries, and forms a worthy counterpart to the still more memorable incident of Pope Leo's appearance in the camp of the same barbarian invader. Seventeen bishops of this see appeared in the mosaics of the ancient cathedral (executed 4112, but now unfortunately lost), all distinguished by the dove hovering near the head,—in allusion to the legend that, after the election of Severus (about 346), that bird invariably appeared in the assemblage to guide the human choice according to Divine will! Now, the election of Severus was in this wise: the clergy and people having

been convened to nominate to the vacant see, an honest weaver, a husband and father, left his loom, not without a little matrimonial altercation previous, urged by curiosity to attend the momentous votation; ashamed of his mean attire, he hid himself behind the church-door; but presently all eyes turned towards him, for a dove had flown in, and at once alighted on his head! One version makes this occur three times, after the poor man had been turned out of the church, because too shabby for admission, and had reappeared on successive days, to be alike signalised by the Divine portent. At all events that weaver, Severus, was made bishop; and till the twelfth century the tradition prevailed, however kept up, that all his successors were alike pointed out by such visible token of the Holy Spirit present! And one moral meaning at least may be profitably derived from this legend, inasmuch as it attests the original freedom in the Church's constitution, the legal intervention of the popular element, and the independence of all external authority in the manner of providing for spiritual needs within each diocese, or, we should rather say, within each of the provinces subject to their respective metropolitans. In such examples the poetry of superstition may be the record of truth.

We are told much by Agnellus of the splendours distinguishing the sacred edifices at Ravenna: the munificent donations of emperors and archbishops,—the mosaics on gold ground, the silver tabernacles, the paintings illustrative of Evangelic history round church walls, etc. It was, no doubt, the early-attained excellence of art at this centre that gave rise to another beautiful legend referring to a picture of the SAVIOUR in the basilica of S. Peter, built here under Valentinian III. A holy hermit, in some Oriental desert, had prayed earnestly to be permitted to behold the Divine Person as made manifest in the garb of mortality; and it was at last intimated to him in a vision that he should travel to Ravenna, where the actual semblance worn by the Son of Man might be contemplated. He arrived here, attended by two faithful



lions, tame as housedogs, and after observing all the pictures on sacred walls came before one which an inner voice assured him to be no other than the genuine likeness of the Lord. Kneeling in rapture, he poured out his soul in gazing upon the heavenly beauty of that form; and in such overwhelming emotion was his life brought to blissful close, ebbing away with the tide of devout joy. The citizens give honourable interment to his remains; and the faithful beasts who, couching one at the head, one at the foot of his grave, soon grieved away their lives also, were buried beside their master. One would give much to be assured which, among the pictures or mosaics in Ravenna's churches, were the one indicated in this story.

Christian Art in general, but specially the Mosaic, seems to have attained high excellence at Ravenna even earlier than at Rome; and indeed the various works in such artistic form of the fifth and sixth centuries that still adorn this city's churches, are more interesting, and bolder in composition than the contemporary examples of the same art in the Papal metropolis. Vitreous mosaic (*crustae vermiculatae*), substituted for that in coloured marbles or terra cotta more anciently in use, was first applied, under the Empire, to the adornment of walls and ceilings in private chambers; sometimes also for pavements in temples, or in the banquet hall. In this latter material, more capable of brilliant effect, mosaic was early adopted by the Church for representation of sacred subjects; its enduring nature, its suitability for majestic and colossal figures or groups, being sufficient recommendation. Banished by antique artists to a subordinate and merely decorative place, where it seldom attempted even the higher range of mythologic subjects (though we find exceptions indeed in the finest specimens from Pompeii and Praeneste), mosaic, as fostered by the Church, soon rose into a nobler sphere, and began to claim attention by characteristics of progressive vitality,—advancement in technical skill, and superiority in the themes undertaken. When at Rome, lin-

gering in old churches at evening hours, I have frequently observed how the majestic mosaic forms that look down from vaulted apse or storied chancel-arch, gain enhanced effect, more solemnly expressive, whilst other coloured representations become obscure in the dim light; and it is undeniable that many of those early Christian art-works have power to impress and interest quite apart from claims of the beautiful, and even when their characteristics are actually rude or grotesque. The Mosaic is pre-eminently a religious art in its higher capabilities.

Turning to the examples of this form at Ravenna, we find the mosaic adornment of churches become conspicuous in the fifth century, through the care of Archbishops, of Honorius, and Galla Placidia; and in the latter part of the sixth century, after the fall of the Gothic kingdom, the churches rebuilt, or reconsecrated for Catholic instead of Arian worship, received new embellishments, though it is in some instances uncertain whether attributable to heretical or orthodox donors. The beautiful and varied mosaic series in the chapel of the archiepiscopal palace, are still intact. Those in the basilica of S. John, founded 425, have perished, save a few insignificant fragments; another church, raised in 438, was almost rebuilt, and entirely modernized, in 1683. The mosaics of the sixth century in the now ruinous *S. Michele* have been sold, and left to find their way to Berlin. When the cathedral was rebuilt in 1735, with almost total loss of its ancient artistic wealth, and without regard for the norma of the original in the new architecture, among other contents that perished were all the mosaics of the tribune and chancel, ordered by an archbishop in 1112, representing the Resurrection and Ascension, the martyrdom of S. Apollinaris, and the seventeen sainted prelates of this see.

When Ravenna was an important naval station, and the sea (now nearly four miles distant) only divided from her walls by the waters of a vast lagune, Augustus turned these local advantages to account by constructing a harbour capable

of sheltering 250 ships, called *Portus Classis*, between which and the city soon sprang up a populous suburb, or rather additional town, known as Caesarea; the basilica of *S. Apollinare in Classe*, about two miles from the actual city, being the sole monument that retains, merely in its name, the record of that populous quarter, never restored after having been laid waste by the Longobards in 728. In the story of architecture this once splendid church fills a conspicuous place, and is described by Agincourt as « a new example in the blending of the form of the temple with that of the antique basilica, in order to its adaptation for the rites and usages of the Church in early Christian periods ». Considered the most perfect model of its class in Italy, it has, notwithstanding such claims, been subjected to many and grievous outrages; and when I visited Ravenna, (before the change of government), nothing so surprised me as the woeful neglect and dilapidation in which I found this magnificent edifice. It seemed like a mournfully impressive type of the decline of that ancient Christianity, that pure and apostolic constitution of the earlier Church, over whose ruins the potent system of the Papacy has been constructed. This basilica of Caesarea rose complete by the year 549, after rapidly executed works under the direction of Julianus, the treasurer (*argentarius*), who represented the Government of Justinian, and who had already founded the splendid church of *S. Vitalis* within the city. An atrium with porticoes extends in front; the nave (130 feet in length) being divided from the aisles by massive columns of Hymettian marble with Corinthian capitals and arcades, above which is a high attic with round-arched windows; the roof resting on rafters concealed by no woodwork; beyond the nave, a flight of steps above a crypt leading into the sanctuary, which terminates in a vaulted apse, adorned with mosaics still entire in their olden beauty. A monastery, adjoining the church, was built in 596; restorations were effected in the ninth century by Pope Leo III; but in later times began the work

of spoliation ; many valuable mosaics perished ; of more than fifty windows the greater number were blocked up ; the pulared atrium was taken down ; the interior walls were stripped of the fine marble, once completely clothing them . by Sigismund Malatesta , lord of Rimini , to which city those spoils were transferred (in 1450) ; the monastery was suppressed , its buildings left desolate , from a period not , I believe , certain : and a dreary old farmhouse now represents , or rather effaces the remains of , that cloistral retreat.

Never shall I forget the first impression received from this still noble , though now forlorn , monument of the sixth century , which stands close to the road in the midst of a vast marshy plain ; set in a mournful landscape , bounded westward by distant Apennines , in low but gracefully varied outlines , to the east by the historic pine-forest , which extending far as the eye can reach , divides the level maremma from the sea with its dense growth , presenting the apparent regularity in form of another mountain-chain. It was the sunset-hour of a fine May day ; yet even that joyous season did not dispel the monotonous melancholy of the scene ,—accordant indeed with the character of that lone church ; and as I stood at its portal to observe the last gleam of golden light on the Apennines , the continual croaking of frogs in the marsh was the sole sound to disturb the silence. Not a human being did I see in or near the sacred premises , except the invariable *custode* , though at this period the desolate-looking farm was tenanted , one wing being the habitation of the priest here on duty for the celebration of a daily mass , but obliged to leave at night , on account of malaria , in the sultrier months. The basilica exterior , plain and venerably simple , has no very remarkable feature left , save the high cylindrical campanile that rises near one angle of a façade partly concealed by those farm-buildings. But the effect , as one enters , is at once aerial and majestic ; nor has the character of splendour been altogether obliterated by the sad vicissitudes this building has passed through. The



medallion portraits of Archbishops still look down, a solemn company, from above the arcades. Not more than three altars (probably the usual number in basilicas of the same period) are seen, each surmounted by a richly moulded marble canopy, in the perspective beyond long files of pillars,—except indeed one other, isolated in the nave, and evidently more modern, of cubic form, bearing an inscription that tells how S. Apollinaris twice appeared on this spot, and thence proceeded to incense the holy place, visible during his vigils to the young S. Romuald, whom he enjoined to devote himself to the religious life, before that step had yet been taken by the founder of the Camaldulense Order. Eight marble sarcophagi, the tombs of archbishops, in the aisles, present early examples of Christian symbolism in their relief ornaments; and the mitred portraits,—those in the nave of mosaic, in the aisles of fresco—have been completed in succession down to the last, Cardinal Falconieri, 126th occupant of this Metropolitan See. But the mosaics of the tribune, probably ordered by the Archbishop Agnellus (553–66), are the most precious among art-works still preserved here.

The principal subject, on the apsidal vault, is the Transfiguration, the earliest example of its appearance in Art, except in another mosaic, of the IV century, at the St. Catherine convent on Mount Sinai, and a sculpture, supposed of the same period, given by Agincourt. But here the treatment is purely mystic and quite unhistoric: above a verdant plain planted with trees hangs a large Cross in a nimbus studded with stars and surrounded by a jewelled border; the head of the Saviour, very beautiful, being seen in the centre, at the juncture of the arms; above, is a hand issuing from clouds; laterally, are Moses and Elias, half-figures, with names written, also rising out of clouds; below, the three Apostles, represented by sheep standing under trees; on the arms of the Cross being inscribed the A and O; and at the summit, letters read by some critics as *IXΘΥΣ*, but by Ciampini as *IMDYC*, and by him interpreted: *Immolatio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*. In the centre of a flowery plain, immedi-

ately underneath, stands St. Apollinaris, in attitude of prayer, with nimbed head, and vested in an ample chasuble, perhaps first example of such costume in art; and twelve other sheep, at the basement of the composition, stand for the Apostolic company. Between the four windows of this apse are the figures, each in act of blessing, of Ursinus, Ursus, Severus, and Ecclesius, sainted Prelates of this See. On the walls round the choir are other subjects on smaller scale: the sacrifices of Abel and Melchizedek, both at the same altar, where Abel is offering a lamb; Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac; the consecration of this church by the bishop Maximianus in presence of three Emperors, the jointly reigning Constantine, Heraclius, and Tiberius, whose names are here restored in a modern inscription. Besides these is another mosaic group, as to which have been proposed various, and some vague explanations, but which Ciampini interprets in convincing manner as the presentment of a scene unique among art-subjects, but naturally admitted among historic memorials here: — the young Justinian, when fourteen years of age, received by Theodoric as a hostage, sent to Ravenna in that capacity by his uncle, the Emperor Justinus, in 497; the Gothic king being here seated at table, and the young prince, with his tutor, introduced into his presence by the Greek envoy. Over and around the arch of the tribune is a continuation of this mosaic-series: a medallion bust of the Saviour holding a book and in act of blessing: the symbols of the Four Evangelists; twelve sheep (for the Apostles) appearing to issue from the mystic cities, Jerusalem and Bethlehem; the Archangels Michael and Gabriel; St. Matthew and St. Luke. Much damage has been suffered by, and much modern work applied to, these mosaics, several parts being new, restored either in similar material or merely in painting; and this at different periods, in the last instance by an artist named Ricci, 1816.

In the forlorn decay of a life truly belonging to the past, Ravenna is especially distinguished by the isolation and grandeur of its sacred monuments, which stand like sculptures

against a dark background, in effect undisturbed by other objects; and here, where « the last Caesarian fortress stood », the terrific shocks that accompanied the fall of Empire become present to the mind with more vividness than even in the pages of Gibbon. The far-extending solitude of flat marshy environs girt by the solemn gloom of pine forest, the wide, grass-grown streets, the ruinous fortifications veiled with ivy or creeping plants, the silent palaces of faded aristocracy, and cottage-like dwellings of the poorer classes, may excite regret as to the social state indicated, but in their aggregate form a fit framework for the impressive monumental picture. The Middle Ages have passed over this fallen capital of the Gothic kingdom, almost without leaving one trace behind; and in the Ravenna of the Papal States the actualities of the present were alike uninteresting and insignificant.

It is in the mosaic that Christian art is most conspicuous at this centre, and that the religious idea of the ages of Honorius, of Theodoric, and the Exarchs appears most intelligibly manifest. That Greek school, whose works we have here before us, may be said to have been mainly occupied, during the fifth and sixth centuries, in illustrating those devotional tendencies, then continually gaining strength, for the veneration of saints, the exaltation of the Blessed Virgin to Christian regards, the more clearly-developing ideas of angelic guardianship, and of the honours due to thrones, dominations, principedoms, powers, in the celestial hierarchy; moreover in celebrating, beside these higher themes, and strangely associated with them, the admitted presence of Caesarism in the sanctuary, of the Emperor with his body-guard, the Empress with her court-ladies amidst sainted prelates and holy symbols on the storied walls or dome of apse and chancel; while the absence of the Papacy from Art-treatment, and (as we may infer) from thought alike, is singularly noticeable.

Nothing is more evident, indeed, in the ecclesiastical story of Ravenna, than the fact that this city was slow to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, at least in the sense

now claimed; and in many instances the recorded administration of her church-affairs seems to attest a principle of local independence quite unchecked. We read in the chronicle given by Muratori (*Rer. Ital. Script. t. i. p. 44*), of an unworthy intruder, John X, being deposed from this see, in the ninth century, « by all the people », with no note of reference to an external judgment-seat, or requisite sanction from any higher tribunal; and in the most valuable of local records extant, the prelate-historian Agnellus seems to own, with a sigh of submissive regret, the fact of Rome's headship, not as resting on a primordial principle of revealed religion, but (as he naively expresses his theory) on the mere privilege of possessing such an inestimable treasure as the great Apostle's tomb! — an accidental and material advantage in lieu of an inalienable and divinely-conferred right! It is true that a letter (given by Muratori) of S. Peter Chrysologus (Archbishop, 439—50) acknowledges a principality proper to that see « in which the blessed Apostle is still living » (*beatus Petrus Apostolus vivus sit*); but can we discover a sense confirmatory of the assumed dependence on Rome in Agnellus's narrative of the circumstances that led to that prelate's election, as follows? « The general multitude of the people assembled with the clergy, according to the discipline of the Church, and elected for themselves a pastor, with whom they repaired to Rome, and appeared before the holy Pope of the Apostolic See, desiring he would ordain their elect, lest so great a Church should be left many days widowed of her Pontiff »; after which steps (the chronicler proceeds to say) was beheld by the Pope (Sixtus III) a celestial vision of St. Peter and S. Apollinaris, with *another* candidate between them, whom they commanded him to appoint to this see; and Sixtus consequently set aside the former election, showing to the Ravenna clergy that they should be contented to receive him whose elevation had been divinely prescribed, though a stranger of another diocese, — he who became the sainted Archbishop, Peter Chrysologus. And can we understand in



the rapturous exaltation of this local Church by the author of the *Monumenta Hist. Raven.*, anything less than an implied assertion of independence, even with all due allowances for lyric style? *O princeps Cathedra raro habitatori munita, quae lucet in tenebris, et tenebrae nesciunt te comprehendere! Quanta privilegia tua! Quanta dominatio tua!*

Observing the chronologic order, we should first visit the octagonal baptistery, that stands near to, but distinct from, the cathedral, and is the only structure of the fourth century at Ravenna still unaltered, except in details of ornament; founded about the same period as the church (380) by S. Ursus, though not enriched with its most interesting contents, the mosaics, ordered by another prelate, Neon, till about 430, or, according to Ciampini, 431. On the cupola of this curiously characterized building is the Baptism of our Lord, a composition in which classic influences are still apparent, and the principal figures have dignity; the Saviour, standing in the water, of fine form and natural action; the St. John pouring water from a vase over His head and holding a jewelled cross—perhaps due to a restorer; beyond the central group being seen the Jordan, personified as an aged man, with urn and reed, who seems floating on his stream, like the river-gods in antique sculpture; below, carried round the domical compartment like a frieze, the group of the Apostles, majestic figures, quite classically treated, in aspect (except one, S. Peter) almost youthful, each vested either in a cloth-of-gold tunic and white pallium, or with the tunic white and the pallium golden, each wearing a high cap like a mitre, and carrying a leafy crown in one hand, that of S. Peter red, that of S. Paul gold (certainly no indication of inferiority in the latter to the former); and on a still lower compartment, at the intervals between the arcades of a triforium, are alternated designs (also mosaic) of singularly symbolic character: altars, or altar-tombs, on each of which is laid a lily or a palm, and the four Gospels, each placed on a kind of suggestus, with richly-embroidered cushion, where the sacred book

lies open, just as it used to be exhibited in the midst of hall or cathedral at the assemblies of Oecumenic Councils; so that we see here, in compendious symbolism, the representation of those great comitia of the Church. Around the walls was inscribed a metrical epigraph, one distich thus:

« Magnanimus hunc namque Neon summusque sacerdos  
Excoluit pulchro componens omnia cultu ».

We are told that the original pavement is more than fifteen feet below the actual floor of this baptistery. An altar and ciborium here are said to be the donation of S. Ursus—who was a Sicilian of noble birth, and bestowed all his large property in that island on the Ravenna See.

Next in order we should visit the small church of SS. Nazarius and Celsus, to which saints is dedicated that most interesting edifice, the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, built for herself in 440, therefore ten years before her death, by that princess, the daughter of Theodosius, and for some years Empress Regent during the minority of her son, Valentinian III.—a woman the strange vicissitudes of whose chequered career add to the story of declining Empire one more tragic episode, which would be more pathetic, were we allowed to ascribe any attributes of moral elevation to her character. Alternately exalted and degraded, she lived to be a Gothic Queen, a Roman Empress, twice the captive of barbarian armies, and once driven on foot amidst the common herd before the car of the usurper, her first husband's murderer. Talent sufficient to subjugate the will of her two husbands and her feeble brother, Honorius, she seems not to have wanted, nor that sort of demonstrative piety then fashionable at the imperial Court; but her conduct in consenting to the unjust execution of her unfortunate cousin, Serena, widow of Stilicho, during the siege of Rome by Alaric, shows Placidia in a repulsive light, cruel in her levity. Her mausoleum, unlike others in this range, is a massive

but low building of cruciform plan, measuring fifty-five by forty-four palms, with a cupola, and decorative details of that Arabic-Byzantine style which first found its way into Italy from the Sicilian shores (see Gally Knight's work on Italian Churches). Behind the single altar of diaphanous Oriental alabaster, stands an immense marble sarcophagus, quite plain, but originally covered with silver plating, where the body of Placidia was entombed, in gorgeous vestments, sitting upright on a chair of cypress wood, and visible through a small aperture (1). At the other cross-extremities are the marble sarcophagi of Honorius, of Valentinian III, and Constantius his father, the two latter laid in the same tomb; and the Christian symbols with which these are sculptured, lambs, doves drinking from vases, fruit-bearing palms, the four rivers, fountains, and the holy monogram, entitle both sarcophagi to attention. The tiny cupola is one rich field of mosaics, with flowery arabesques, encircling the cross, on golden ground; on its pendentives being represented eight Prophets in pairs, whose costume is classic, and action

(1) The body was unfortunately consumed in 1577, through the mischief of some children, who inserted a taper into the aperture, and thus, the vestments taking fire, was this unique relic of imperial pomp in death reduced to a heap of ashes, no more even in this condition visible, as the orifice has been closed ever since. The usage of burying members of the imperial family in superb attire, with jewellery, ornaments, and even toys in fantastic profusion, was curiously attested on the opening of the tomb of Maria, wife of Honorius and daughter of Silicho, in the course of the works at S. Peter's, 1544, when it was found that the dead princess had been laid amidst trinkets and playthings, in vestments from which were extracted no less than thirty-six lbs of embroidered gold—all which precious contents of that tomb were carelessly suffered to disappear, dispersed none knows whither, to the infinite regret of antiquarians. This practice of laying valued objects beside the dead was borrowed early from pagan use by the Christians at Rome, as evident from discoveries in catacombs.

that of declamation. Above the portal is seen the Good Shepherd, as a youth seated on a rock, a long cross (the *crux hastata*) in one hand, sheep and a landscape beyond. At the opposite end, above the altar, is the SAVIOUR'S figure with its proper attributes, the long cross held so as to rest on one shoulder, the open Gospels in the other hand, and beside Him a cabinet with open doors containing three books laid on shelves, with titles on the covers, *Lucas, Matthæus, Joannes* : near this, a gridiron with fire kindled beneath—this last detail (unique, I believe, among accessories in mosaic art) obviously intended to allude to some destruction of heretical books, and probably to the burning of those of Nestorius, after the Council of Ephesus, in which his tenets were condemned nine years before this mausoleum was built. Curious is this first appearance of recorded intolerance in religious art! The basilica of S. John the Evangelist, founded by Galla Placidia, 425, now retains little of the splendour, and scarce a remnant of the mosaics described as once here; having been almost entirely rebuilt, but with preservation of its ancient columns, and the original high altar with its confessional, rich in Greek marble, porphyry and serpentine, of the fifth century; and this church has still its art-attractions in the frescoes by Giotto, on a chapel vault, of the four Evangelists and four Latin Doctors; its fine Gothic porch, and some very curious sculptures on the facade, being supposed of the twelfth century. The legend connected with the origin of this building is strikingly poetic, but not, it seems, in all details traceable up to a period nearly so remote as that referred to,—see the *Monumenta Hist. Raven.*, given by Muratori. The princess and her suite were on a voyage from Constantinople to Ravenna, when a tremendous tempest overtook their vessels; in the extreme peril Placidia enjoined all to direct their prayer and trust to the beloved Apostle, vowing a splendid temple to him, should they escape in safety. Presently appeared the visible assurance of his protection, for S. John the Evangelist was seen by all,



on *each* ship, performing the task of the fear-paralyzed mariners, and thus steering them safe into port. Mindful of her vow, Placidia ordered works for constructing one of the finest churches yet seen in this city; the richest marbles were brought from various quarries; mosaics were executed for apse and chancel-arch, representing the tempest and vision at sea, also (from the Apocalypse) the Saviour giving a book to the Apostle, desiring him to eat it; and the tessellated pavement was disposed so as to imitate, in wavy lines of marble, the tossing sea-waves. But the imperial lady was in grief, seeing that she could not hope to obtain any sort of relic of S. John for her church's consecration; and her confessor, S. Barbatian, advised her to persist in prayer and fasting with trust that her great desire might in some manner be fulfilled. Both kept vigil together, night after night, in the new building; and at last, when both had fallen asleep after long watching, the confessor saw a majestic personage in long white vestments, who stood offering incense at the altar; he woke the princess to point out that vision, which she also beheld; instantly rushing to the altar, Placidia threw herself at the feet of the mysterious figure, and seized his right foot, so firmly that the sandal was left in her hand, when S. John the Evangelist (for he it indeed was) vanished the moment mortal had touched his form, now immortal. Next day in presence of the Emperor, the Archbishop, and S. Barbatian, Placidia offered this inestimable relic at the altar, and then had it immured in a secret place within this building, where none should be able to find it; though another version of the story, written by Raynaldus (Archbishop of Ravenna in 1303), mentions the discovery of this sandal, in his own time, through means of a parchment found within the breast of a silver crucifix given in pawn by the monks of a cloister attached to the same church (v. Muratori). We cannot, however, admit even the minor claim to great antiquity in this legend, except so far as relates to the tempest, the vow at sea, and the building of the church in fulfilment,

seeing that Agnellus, unquestionably the best authority, confines himself to the simple narration of those credible facts without any note of the vision, the sandal, or its bestowal and immuring. Probably the amplified version, embellished with such marvels, dates not higher than the age to which are referred by good critics, namely, the twelfth century, those reliefs still seen above the portal, that represent the several acts in this story (v. Cicognara, *Storia della Scultura italiana*): the apparition of the apostle attended by angels at the altar, while Placidia kneels to touch his foot; the offering or enshrining of the holy sandal by the princess, the emperor and a mitred prelate introduced in the scene; and above, a half-length figure of the SAVIOUR looking down upon the group below from a species of tabernacle. That very detail of the concealment shakes the credit of this truly picturesque story, because adverse to the practice, which, from the time relics were first kept in churches, required the periodical exposure for veneration, not the withdrawal from regard and knowledge of such sacred objects.

Noblest among specimens of fifth-century art at Ravenna are the mosaics in the chapel built by S. Peter Chrysologus, about A. D. 440, in the archiepiscopal palace, the interior of this oratory being one field of sacred representations, which impressed me as one of the most grandly conceived series in all such artistic produce. This palace is itself a curiosity; and one of its great halls contains a valuable museum of local antiquities, Christian and Pagan, mostly monumental; among the former series a fine Apostle's head in mosaic, and some rich inlaid pavement from the now, alas, vanished cathedral. It is from this antiquarian treasury that we pass into the beautiful chapel, of plan like the letter T; and as we first distinguish by dim light the solemn figures and sternly expressive heads, the large-winged angels and sacred symbols on the golden groundwork of storied walls and vaults, the mind is possessed by a sense of the majesty of the ancient Church and her sacramental mysteries. We seem to have left behind the

glare and follies of the world in crossing this threshold. Above a marble incrustation round the lower part, expands that field of mosaics in brilliant hues unfaded, as the quaint and massive architecture is alike intact, since the days when the emperors of a ruined state trifled away their fear-stricken lives at Ravenna. Not yet is any subordinate personage allowed prominence in the sacred grouping; not yet has the worship of the SAVIOUR been disputed by that of the Madonna or saints. His form is everywhere conspicuous and central here, represented as at different ages, but always at once recognisable. We see Him as a young boy, with the twelve Apostles in a series of medallion heads; we see Him again as a youth of about eighteen years, with the same benignly beautiful features more developed; and again as a fully matured man, still mild and noble-looking, in costume like that of a Greek Emperor, with tunic of gold tissue, purple chlamys with jewelled clasp at the right shoulder, in one hand a long red cross, in the other a volume open at the words of most blessed assurance: *Ego sum Via, Veritas, et Vita*. His head alone among all here before us is crowned by the nimbus; and striking indeed is the superiority, the majestic benignity that distinguishes the Divine subject as here conceived by art, compared with the repulsive aspect given to its form in another mosaic-treatment of the same year, 440, at the Ostian Basilica, near Rome. On the vault of this venerable chapel are the usual winged symbols of the Evangelists, each with a jewelled book; and at the centre the holy monogram in a disc, supported on the uplifted arms of four angels, majestic creatures in long white vestments, whose solemn countenances express a kind of awful joy. The numerous other figures and heads of Apostles and saints are characterized by general sameness of type, with eyes large and staring, forehead low and flat, lips full; the female heads all veiled, but with rich coiffure and braided hair in sight, except S. Felicitas, who has the head-dress of a nun. SS. Peter and Paul display the well-known types with which one is fami-

liar even from the period of catacomb-art. Over the altar is the only mosaic here of later date than the rest, one from the lost cathedral (twelfth century), representing the blessed Virgin in act of prayer, with outspread arms, the head closely veiled, the figure in long purple robes, the aspect that of matron maturity, modest, severe—the unmistakable character here intended, that of the interceding mother, or rather the personified Church, not that of the heavenly queen who herself demands worship.

A few other churches in Ravenna are desolate and neglected monuments of the fifth century. Among these is *S. Agata Maggiore*, a fine example, built by the Bishop Exuperantius, about 400, the mosaics in which are described by Ciampini; but I regretted to see its actual state of forlorn decay, its marble and granite columns apparently in danger of sinking beneath the superincumbent weight. *S. Francesco*, ascribed to S. Peter Chrysologus, has been restored without loss of much that is essential to the early basilica style, and has a spacious imposing interior, three apses corresponding to nave and aisles, colonnades of white marble with Corinthian capitals and uniform shafts, high attics and vaulting, probably a modern substitute for the wooden roof with rafters decorated in colour or gilding, assumed to be the primitive form of this detail in basilicas. This church is celebrated for mediaeval tombs, especially that with a recumbent figure, (relief) vested as a mendicant friar, of Ostasio da Polenta, lord of Ravenna, deceased 1386; but greater renown once attached to it as the resting place of Dante, whose remains now lie in an external mausoleum leaning against the church's lateral wall, though quite distinct, originally built in 1482, and restored, in the poorest style, 1692.

We now pass to the Ostro-gothic epoch. In 493 Theodoric, king of that nation, after obtaining from the feeble and suicidal Greek Empire a formal concession of Italy, became master of Ravenna, and in consequence of the whole peninsula, establishing his court at this city, which he had taken after



a long siege sustained by the Herulian Odoacer, once dictator and patrician of Rome. This kingdom, of which Ravenna became the capital, destined to endure but sixty years, comprised (from about A. D. 520) the whole of Spain as well as Italy, western Illyria, and southern Gaul, being bounded by the Danube, the Rhone, the Garonne, the Theiss, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. Theodoric's own reign (489—526), on the whole glorious and prosperous, gave the first example of enlightened, and for a time popular foreign domination in Italy: but unlimited power, and, perhaps more than anything else, the irritable feeling of the sectarian aware that his faith was reprobated and himself considered an alien by the highest and most influential of his subjects and neighbouring powers, by the Greek Caesars as well as by the Roman pontiff and senate, seem to have embittered and corrupted his declining life, to have brought on a species of moral decay in this prince's character, who, after burdening his conscience with guilt through the unjust deaths of Pope John I, of the esteemed senator Symmachus, and the illustrious Boetius, left his sceptre in the hands of a feeble boy, directed indeed by an able and high-minded woman, Amalasunta, Theodoric's widowed daughter, who was ungratefully betrayed and condemned to die by her cousin Theodatus, called by herself to the throne left vacant after the premature death of her son, Athalaric (534). A short time before his decease Theodoric had issued a decree, provoked by the severe measures of the Greek court against the Arians, for depriving his Catholic subjects of their churches, to be occupied by his own sect; but before the day fixed for fulfilment he died amidst pangs of remorse and the hatred of the populace; legend soon devising the horrific tale of his spirit having been seen hurled into the crater of Lipari. To the worthless and pusillanimous Theodatus, who shrank from even the attempt to defend his states against the Greek invasion now undertaken by Justinian, and who was assassinated, succeeded the valiant Vitiges (536—40); Ildebaldus and

Eraricus, both cut off by violence, 541; Totila, so heroically conspicuous in the Italo-Greek wars, (544-52); and lastly, Teja, with whose death in battle, 553, closes the period of Ostro-Gothic rule in this Peninsula. Ravenna was besieged and taken by Belisarius, (539), after whose ingress her royal palace was ransacked of all its treasures, those spoils to be sent as trophies to Constantinople.

A visit to this city may suffice to convince how absolute a misnomer is the term « Gothic », applied to architecture; not one feature, no hint or presentiment of the Pointed Style, (more properly called Germanic, though not strictly referable to any national limitation), being seen among the few edifices that remain here or elsewhere on this side the Alps of Theodoric's or his successors' foundation. The able historian, Troya, assumes that the Arian Goths in all probability avoided the triangular form in architectural design, and thus created for themselves a barrier against adoption of that style, because the triangle was to the Catholics an emblem of the Divine Unity in Trinity (1). I am not aware that any distinctive features in Arian ritual were such as to affect the building of their temples, or induce essential difference in internal arrangements from those of Catholics; but assuredly that sect must have been far from admitting the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, or the deeper meaning of types and symbols referring to the Person of our Lord.

Many churches were built at Ravenna by Theodoric: *S. Martin*, (now *S. Apollinare Nuovo*), raised as the cathedral

(2) Troya's argument, though ingenious, seems to involve contradiction. He assumes that the acute arch *did* prevail at Ravenna under the Goths, early in the VI century; and that those Arians first regarded the ogive form as a symbol of sense adverse to the Catholic Church, which it eventually ceased to be in their eyes when known to all in its orthodox import; but he elsewhere concludes that, in the V and VI centuries, the acute arch was not in favour for any long time, nor owing to any avowed principle, among those invaders (« Codice Diplomatico Longobardo »).

of Arian worship; *S. Theodore* (according to one report much more ancient), reconsecrated as *S. Spirito*; and others that have perished, severally dedicated to *S. George in Tauro*, (built by the Arian bishop Unimundus), *S. Eusebius*, (destroyed by an archbishop in the time of Charlemagne); two others, in and near the suburb of Classis, afterwards dedicated by the Catholics to the Beati Sergius and Zeno; and another to *S. Eusebius*, which stood till 1457, when it was demolished by the Venetians in order to raise a fortress on the spot. *S. Spirito* is a small edifice of sombre aspect, but interesting for the architectural character of its interior, its rich marbles, and sculptured pulpit of the sixth century. The Arian baptistery, built also by Theodoric, now *Santa Maria in Cosmedin*, is a small octagonal chapel of gloomy interior, the mosaics on whose vault are said to have been ordered in the sixth century after the catholic reconsecration. Similar in subject and *motif* to those in the more ancient baptistery, these works are in style so inferior that we might refer them to a later school and different phase of civilization; and the omission of the emblem of the Œcumenic council, the enthroned Gospel, whilst other details appear alike in both compositions, might confirm the idea of an Arian origin (1). In the scene of the baptism here the personified Jordan seems the principal personage; the other figures are grotesque, and the *S. John* is in attitude so uncouth as to suggest the notion of a barbaric dance. The Apostles, occupying a circular compartment below, are in classic (ancient Roman) costume, each carrying in his hands a crown set with gems, except *SS. Peter and Paul*, the former of whom holds his keys, the latter two scrolls, implying his importance among authors of sacred books: all these figures seeming to approach a throne where,

(1) One historian of Ravenna, Fabri, indeed maintains this, instead of the later origin; and it is but local tradition that assigns these mosaics to the date 553, and to the archbishop *S. Agnellus*.

erect upon cushions, stands a large cross studded with blue gems, a sacerdotal stole being hung across its arms (1).

The mausoleum of Theodoric, raised during his lifetime, (not, as conjectured, by Amalasunta under the reign of his grandson), is a marvel of construction, though by no means admirable in decorative details. Sharing the fate of those of S. Helena and S. Constantia near Rome, it was at some mediaeval period dedicated as a church, *S. Maria Rotonda*, but is now again left to silent solitude, having been long since robbed of the sarcophagus in which Greek bigotry would not grant the repose of the tomb to an Arian sovereign. A decagonal structure of marble, it rises with an upper story on a high basement, at each of whose ten sides opens a deep recess under a semicircular arch; the interior, reached by two outer staircases added in 1780, is circular, and quite plain, lighted by small windows opening, near the summit, between a simple band and a cornice, and roofed by a stupendous cupola, one solid mass of Istrian stone, measuring in diameter 40,4 metres; from the base to the summit 4,3; in thickness 1,14; the weight estimated at more than two hundred tons, and by Ricci at four million Roman pounds, about equivalent to that of eighteen or twenty thousand men in the scale together! Not indeed a beautiful, but a striking object, this extraordinary tomb rises among woods at a short distance from the city, where a sylvan scene of quiet loveliness surrounds the monument of eventful story and perished nationality. It is popular belief that a huge porphyry urn, like an antique bath, found near the outside of this building, and now standing below the ruins of Theodoric's palace in a street, is the

(1) The fruit-bearing palm, emblem of celestial rewards, is here also seen between each pair of apostolic figures; and the curious detail of horns like crabs' claws, given to the Jordan, is explained by Ciampini as typical of the overflow of that river, each Summer, when the sun enters the sign of Cancer.



violated tomb of that prince; but authorities decide against this local tradition, as also against the idea that the lost sarcophagus had stood on the summit of that massive cupola—the interior being its suitable place.

Those ruins, called the Palace of Theodoric, are conjectured by Hope to belong more probably to that of the Greek Exarchs; and the pristine character of the edifice is still distinctly presented to us among the fine mosaics in the basilica founded by the Gothic king.

*S. Apollinare Nuovo*, built as an Arian cathedral, and first dedicated to S. Martin, was reconsecrated for Catholic worship by S. Agnellus, and enriched with its mosaic decorations, pronounced the finest examples of the Christian school in Italy, about 570. It was not till about 836 that this church was re-dedicated to St. Apollinaris by an Archbishop (afterwards Pope as John IX), who transferred hither that Saint's body from the extramural basilica, in order to secure it from the rapine of the Saracens. The groups of those mosaic art-works cover two high attics above colonnades. On one side, as if issuing from the gates of the seaport *Classis* (represented with its harbour and ships), we see a stately procession of twenty-two female saints, all with names and the prefix *Sca*, all attired alike, with braided and gem-wreathed hair, veil, robe and mantle richly embroidered in gold, each holding a jewelled diadem; the whole company advancing towards the Mother and Child, but preceded by the three Magi, who wear fantastically gay oriental costumes, and have crowns on their heads, being apparently in utmost haste to present their offerings—one of them a negro, perhaps earliest example of such distinction among the three. The Divine Child and the mother are attended by four majestic angels in long vestments with wands. Mary, seated on a magnificent throne, wears a long veil and robe of purple bordered with gold; the Child is fully clad in white and gold, and has the nimbus with cruciform rays; all the other saintly personages, (except the Magi), having also the nimbus, though not like His with rays; and here

we notice one indication of increasing devotional regards for the Virgin Mother, inasmuch as she, like the Child, holds up a hand to give benediction in the same action as He also blesses; thus being taken a part by Mary scarce instanced (that I am aware) in other treatments, modern or ancient, of this scene. On the opposite attic, less favourably displayed owing to the windows that open on the same side, and unfortunately in part concealed by modern obstructions, is the group, indeed more important, consisting of twenty-three male saints, alike holding jewelled crowns, and advancing towards the SAVIOUR; Who sits enthroned between four angels similar to those in attendance on the Mother and Child; those worshippers also issuing from an edifice, no other than the palace of Theodoric, designated in large letters as *palatium*, where we observe the antique Roman arrangement of closing the arched portals with curtains instead of valves. All the saintly figures on these walls have the nimbus and are distinguished by names above their heads; the first in the male group being incomplete « — tinus » (Martinus); the next, S. Clement; and in the rest of this series one other Pope, S. Cornelius, appearing, but nothing in character or attribute to mark out these Roman bishops among their companions (1). Among the female saints, besides the familiarly known Cecilia, Agnes, and Agatha, are others more rarely seen in art — Victoria, Anatolia, Eugenia, Valeria. On higher compartments are figures of smaller scale, prophets or apostles (without name), and miracles or other acts of our LORD, alternating with an emblematic design presenting the inner view of a cupola with a pendent lamp like a diadem; a cross and two doves on the extradados; the lamp (*corona*) being here probably borrowed from the ceremonial of the Byzantine

(1) The figure of St. Stephen, originally at the head of the procession, is lost; and the first, as now seen, is St. Martin. The Saviour's figure is restored with a sceptre in the left hand instead of a book, as formerly, showing the words, « Ego sum Rex gloriæ ».

court, where two such objects used to be carried or suspended before the emperor to signify his care over things temporal and things spiritual: as it was, in fact, with such a diadem serving as a lamp above the high altar of S. Sophia that those potentates were crowned, after which solemnity the same *corona* was restored to its former place and service for lighting the sanctuary. Another valuable mosaic in this church is the half-length figure, in diadem and chlamys, of Justinian, an authentic portrait we may conclude, which has, with strange neglect, been left I know not how long concealed behind an organ-loft—in outline engraving given both by Agincourt and Ciampini. The chapel which contains the body of S. Apollinaris, laid in an altar under a ponderous marble canopy with porphyry columns, is an interesting example of sixth-century architecture, not (I believe) in any respect deprived of its pristine character or olden magnificence.

This reconsecrated cathedral brings us to the epoch of Justinian, the most beneficial for Ravenna, and that which has left to her the most splendid, indeed all the more conspicuous of her extant monuments. That Emperor might be taken as the best representative of the virtues and influences, the religious and intellectual dispositions seated on the Byzantine throne. Pious and austere, munificent towards the Church, while pitiless towards heretics, a theologian by profession, a persecutor on system, affable in manners and easily forgiving, though suspicious; eager for military renown, though parsimonious towards the generals who won it for him; ambitious to shine not only as the greatest Christian legislator, but as poet, musician, architect, but above all as theologian. and implacable towards those who contested his dogmatic theories; in the course of a reign of almost thirty-seven years he not only bestowed all his private property upon ecclesiastics, but founded twenty-six, and supplied means for the founding in all of ninety-six churches, providing them with sacred vessels and vestments, liturgic books and Bibles. No city in his States but received some addition to its public

buildings; no province in which some town or fortress was not restored by him. The great compilation he ordered of the *Institutes* comprises in twelve books, under 776 titles, the constitutions of fifty-four emperors from the time of Hadrian; and subsequently to this famous achievement, were issued 468 additional laws, later compiled as the *Novellae* of Justinian. Such singular blending of ascetic piety and energies, intellect and zeal, no doubt qualified him as a great instrument for the furtherance of Providential designs and for the civilising of the Eastern Empire,—one result of whose agency appears in the fact that under this reign 70,000 idolaters were baptized in the provinces of Asia Minor alone.

The most sumptuous church raised, or at least completed and decorated, by this Emperor at Ravenna, is the Basilica of S. Vitalis, a soldier-martyr who suffered by being buried alive on the spot where a small oratory, built at some primitive period, eventually gave place to the magnificent structure before us, which Ciampini supposes may have been founded towards the end of the fifth century, though not finished till this reign. The account by Agnellus is that the Archbishop Ecclesius, on his return from Constantinople, gave commission, of course in the Emperor's name, A. D. 534, to Julian, the *Argentarius* then in office, to order the demolition of that earlier building and erect in its stead the basilica whose origin was recorded in a now lost inscription once in the portico: « Mandato Ecclesii Episcopi Julianus Argentarius aedificavit, ornavit, atque dedicavit, consecrante vero reverendissimo Maximiano Episcopo sub die Kal. xiii. Mai. sexies P(ost) C(on)sulatum) Basilius Iun. V. G. Indictione x »; and the same ancient chronicler tells us that « no other church in Italy is like this either in architecture or mechanic construction ». Its plan is octagonal, with an oblong chancel advancing from the nave, and a portico, which instead of being parallel to one side, is perpendicular to one angle. The exterior is so plain that we are thereby perhaps rendered more sensible to the Oriental splendours that amaze and take us by surprise on



entering. The sanctities of a thousand years seem to have left their trace on these storied walls; and yet such magnificence as that of Justinian's basilica appears suited rather to the mystic pomps of the Greek, than to the more intelligible and artistic ritual of the Latin Church. Around that dim-lit octagon rise massive semi-circular arcades supporting a cupola, whose compass corresponds to the entire area below; and within the eight major archways, resting on piers, are two stories of small arcades with light columns of Greek marble; the upper arches communicating with a gallery, the lower with an octagonal aisle. On the smaller capitals (Corinthian,) are sculptured anchors, that have suggested the tradition referring them to a temple of Neptune; on the larger, in style Gothic, are relief monograms, in all twenty-eight, one of which has been read as *Narses*, but by Muratori as *Nepos*, probably the name of the architect; the others being more intelligible, as *Ecclesius* and *Julianus*. The whole interior is encrusted with fine marbles, except the cupola and the choir with its apse and vaulting, where we see one of the most brilliant historic series of mosaic compositions—in some respects unique among all in Italian churches. On the apsidal vault is the SAVIOUR seated on a globe, of noble and youthful aspect, with classically chiselled features and dark curling hair, vested in purple robes bordered with gold, and in act of giving a diadem to S. Vitalis, who receives it reverentially with hands muffled (the Oriental form of showing respect) in his mantle; on the other side, stand S. Ecclesius, holding a model of this church, and a white-robed angel, a figure similar to which also introduces S. Vitalis. Over the chancel-arch are fifteen heads in medallions, and the SAVIOUR in the midst; the Apostles with SS. Gervasius and Protasius (the sons of Vitalis) ranged laterally to Him. On the choir-walls, nearest the high altar, are various subjects from the Old Testament: the sacrifices of Abel and Melchisedek, singularly treated, without regard for

chronology, both approaching from opposite sides, with uplifted hands, towards an altar on which are laid a chalice and loaves like the Eucharistic bread; Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac; the three angels entertained by the same patriarch; Isaiah and Jeremiah, the latter standing beside a tower, on whose summit is a crown—supposed an emblem of Jerusalem, and as such, I believe, unique in this art-form; also the Evangelists with their symbols and a writing-table before each; in this instance also the treatment being remarkable—as of those Four Creatures attending the inspired historians, only one, the Angel, has the nimbus, while the Lion and Ox stand on mountain-tops, above and quite distant from the S. Mark and S. Luke.

But most curious are the larger mosaic groups on opposite walls, affording expressive illustration of the place now assumed by Imperial power in the sanctuary—and that both in a moral and material sense. We are told that at Constantinople the Emperor had his throne within the sacred penetralia, even inside the curtains that enveloped the high altar, where, according to western usage, no layman could at any time set his foot; and the scene here pictorially presented is in keeping with such Byzantine claims of prerogative. Its subject might be described as the consecration of this basilica, in the year 547, by the Archbishop Maximianus, with assistance of Justinian, his officers and guard, of Theodora and her court-ladies. The Emperor, of haughty and somewhat bloated aspect, dark complexion and beardless face, wears a purple chlamys fastened at the right shoulder with a great jewelled clasp, a long tunic embroidered in gold, a jewelled diadem round his brow, and jewelled sandals on his feet; three courtiers standing near, who also wear the antique chlamys; beyond these, the Archbishop and two other ecclesiastics, all in white vestments and bare-headed, one with a censer; the prelate only distinguished by his pallium, and by the jewelled cross of gold (not crucifix) in

his hand, also by the name in large letters above; and at the extremity of this group stand the body-guard, one among whom holds a shield with the holy monogram, gem-set, at the centre. Opposite is the group of ladies advancing towards a portal overhung by curtains, and outside of which is a fountain gushing from an urn on a high pedestal—accessories of a church-entrance according to Roman system. The Empress's attire is most gorgeous, flowing purple mantle, white robe heavy with gold embroidery; the head, neck, and bosom covered with jewels, strings of pearls falling like cascades from her diadem; her court-ladies also richly clad in similar fashion, but at due distance from the distinguishing splendours of their mistress. And most curious is it to trace in the strongly-individualized countenance of Theodora, in the large melting eyes, small mouth, delicate but sharpened outlines, a wanton expression but too accordant with her antecedents, and here uneffaced by the hand of time after more than thirteen centuries! Still do we see before us the pantomime actress transformed, by the infatuate fondness of a great sovereign, into the intriguing Empress. Both of this imperial pair have the large nimbus, an attribute not given to any other figures in these groups, though the archbishop here before us ranks among calendared saints! And elsewhere, in these mosaics, do we observe the nimbus on the heads of personages both of the Old and New Testament—as on that of Melchisedek, but not on those of Abel or Abraham. The Emperor and Empress carry vases, like bowls, supposed to contain their offerings for the new church; though Ciampini sees here an action still more significant, assuming that both are charged with the relics (probably those of SS. *Gervasius* and *Protasius*) which the Roman Pontifical prescribes should be borne *by priests*, with tapers and incense, in procession round the church's exterior, as part of the consecrating rite. Yet Justinian, we know, was not present at the consecration of S. Vitalis; and in that same year, 547, Theodora died.

Remembering the notorieties of that lady, we are struck by this glaring proof of the Erastianism, here manifest in art, which could introduce such a figure among Evangelists, saints, and venerated bishops, within the sanctuary! Theodora, had she been a pagan, would probably have left no other reputation than that of a Messalina; that she did not is due to those influences of Christianity which raised opinion into a moral power and dictated the decorum of station. For, whatever might have been said of this woman in her earlier career, as the wife of Justinian her conduct, however mischievous when she intrigued in Church or State affairs, was above suspicion, and never impugned; nor was she insensible to the higher obligations of a Christian princess: she made efforts to rescue others from the infamy she herself had passed through, and left her name in the story of charitable institutions by becoming the foundress of the first Magdalene Asylum, where five hundred unfortunates had refuge from misery and shame. Nor was the heroic temper wanting to her at great crises; for it was owing to her remonstrance that Justinian abandoned the intent of flying with all his treasures and court on occasion of the terrible revolt, fatal to 30,000 lives in one day, that long desolated Constantinople after beginning in the frivolous contests of the circus. We may trust that this Empress, before being removed by the painful disease (cancer) of which she died at an age comparatively young, became sincerely penitent for a past that has so darkened her memory. Agnellus states that the costs of the S. Vitalis Basilica were 26,000 aurei (gold-solidi). It was the first and last church erected after such Oriental type in Italy; and the same treasurer, Julian, when, a few years afterwards, he undertook the building of the extramural S. Apollinaris, adopted a design essentially different. Not till Charlemagne raised his cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle did S. Vitalis become in its turn a model for imitation, as S. Sophia of Constantinople had been to the Ravenna architects. As to what is *modern* in the former



church, the second-rate theatrical frescoes on the cupola, perpetrated in 1782, may excite astonishment at the fallen conditions of art, but still more at the toleration of such disfigurements, and that under ecclesiastic government, in a temple so nobly and historically conspicuous.

The cathedral, rebuilt in uninteresting modern Italian style, retains nothing of its original structure save a lofty cylindrical campanile, like those of Oriental churches. Pursuing our studies of ancient art, we need only linger here to observe a few antiques. of the sixth century, saved from the general wreck: the ivory throne of S. Maximianus, with the monogram of his name and title, « *Episcopus* »; besides various sacred reliefs, rude in design but beautifully executed—in front being the SAVIOUR, of aged and severe aspect, giving benediction, while one hand holds a disk with the Lamb in relief upon it (an uncommon symbol); beside Him, the Evangelists, each figure under an archway: at the sides and back of the seat, scenes from Evangelic history and the life of the patriarch Joseph:—also the silver processional cross, ascribed to S. Agnellus (Archbishop 553—66), in the Greek form, measuring six palms at each length, and adorned with forty heads of saints in medallion reliefs: on one side, at the juncture of the arms, a larger relief of the Resurrection, strange and quaint in design, the figure rising with one foot out of a deep tomb, and holding a banner marked with the cross: on the other side, similarly placed, the Madonna, a veiled matronly personage in act of prayer—here without the nimbus, which is given to the other saints. Among the latter are introduced prelates of this see—the form of the pallium worn by whom led Ciampini to infer a somewhat later origin for this cross than the time of S. Agnellus.

The last of the lives by that saint's namesake acquaints us with Georgius, forty-seventh occupant of this see, here described as rather a wolf than a shepherd to his flock: who, setting out on an expedition to visit the Emperor Lo-

thaire (in 841), carried away the principal treasures from his metropolitan churches, gold and silver vessels, gems from crosses which he had broken to despoil, etc., intending by such bribes to win that prince's favour to his suit for obtaining the exemption of Ravenna from dependency upon Rome. The pompous prelate travelled with a train of 300 horses; but met only with discomfiture and humiliation. After Lothaire had been worsted in battle by his younger brother, Charles, that Archbishop, who had followed the camp of the patron he relied upon, was made prisoner; and on attempting to plead his cause before the victor, displayed the document, « through means of which », says Agnellus, « he trusted to be able to withdraw himself from the obedience of the Roman Pontiff ». But that deed or record (whatever its purport) was, there and then, thrown into the mire, and torn to pieces (*comminuta*) at the point of a lance; thus being caused the irreparable loss of written evidence that might perhaps have confirmed the claim of this illustrious See to an ecclesiastical independence now invoked by many as the most desirable benefit for the Italian Church.

I was struck by the dignity and beauty of religious services at Ravenna; and one occasion here of daily recurrence was yet new to my experiences of devotional usage in Italian cities.

When the *Ave Maria* chimes in the approach of night, and summons all to pray, a scene was presented in the principal piazza, that blended the official and military with a religious character. The guard was mounted with joyous *fanfaronnade* of music before the seat of the then legatine government, while on the balcony of the Communal palace opposite, large tapers were lit, to remain burning as long as those holy bells were ringing. Then ensued twilight and silence, only disturbed by the movement of the throng now quitting their city's gayest centre for their homes. It would be more difficult to describe than distinctly to call to mind the sub-

ding, solemnized calm that made that hour and scene so fascinating among my memories of Ravenna (1).

(1) Originally published in the *Ecclesiologist*.

See Beltrami, « Descrizione di Ravenna »; Spreti on Mosaics (and especially those here); Furietti, « De Musivis »; Pavirani, « Memorie di Galla Placidia », and « Storia del Regno Gotico »; Hope, « History of Architecture »; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, « History of Painting in Italy »; Troya « Storia del Medio Evo d'Italia », v. III; and, above all, the works above cited of Ricci, Ciampini, and Agincourt.

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## XI.

### The Seventh Century.

WHEN the sunset-light gilds the ruins of the Roman Forum, the eye is arrested by that lone column that stands isolate amidst statelier relics, and the classic style of whose shaft and capital strangely contrasts with the rudeness of the plinth and basement raised on a quadrangular staircase; this being the monument that had so puzzled archaeologists before the disencumbering, 1813, of its lower part from the soil in which it had been deeply imbedded, brought to light the mutilated inscription on its plinth that records its dedication to a Greek Emperor, not by Senate and People, but by Smaragdus, Exarch of Ravenna, Patrician of Rome, and Praepositus (or major-domo) of the Imperial Palace, who erected this column, A. D. 608, in honour of the despot Phocas, whose gilt bronze statue stood at its summit. That usurper had opened his way to the throne by the deliberate murder of Mauritius, his unfortunate predecessor, who was actually slain, *in his presence*, on the mangled bodies of his five sons, one an infant, put to death before their father's eyes! To this wretch is ascribed every imaginable virtue in the eulogistic epigraph; but, for the honour of humanity, it is satisfactory to know that not only was his statue cast down from this column, after his death, but the epithets of adulation — *optimo*, *clementissimo*, *piissimo* &c. — were partially erased, and the mention of that bronze image entirely so, from the inscription; so that, but for the name of Smaragdus, and the date by the



year of indiction still to be read, this monument would be without any mark serving for historic identification. Phocas lost his throne and his life by revolution and assassination not long after his last detestable crime in ordering the widow and three daughters of Mauritius to be put to death, though he had given promise to the Byzantine patriarch to leave them unmolested in the convent where they had taken refuge. The memorial to such a ruler serves not only to perpetuate his guilt, but to attest the moral degradation of the age and social state in which it could be erected.

It is painful to associate a character so pure and exalted as that of Pope Gregory I with the story of this blood-stained usurper; but the saintly Pontiff accepted the position of a loyal subject to the legitimate sovereign of Rome, no doubt from worthiest motives. According to ceremonial usage on such occasions, the images of the new Emperor and Empress were received with pomp and acclamations in the ancient capital: the Clergy and Nobility assembled at the Lateran palace in a great hall known as the « basilica Julia », and when the pictures were introduced, the invocation arose from multitudinous voices: *Exaudi, Christe, Phocæ Augusti et Leontiae Augustæ vota*; after which these imperial likenesses were deposited with honour by the Pontiff's own hand in the oratory of St. Caesarius within the same palace.

We may commence our studies of the monuments of this age at the chapel adjoining the Lateran Baptistery, erected by John IV, in 640, and dedicated to St. Venantius, a bishop of Dalmatia, the native-land of that Pope, whose father had borne the same name—a circumstance that perhaps induced him, in filial feeling, to obtain the relics of this Saint together with those of Domnus, another Dalmatian bishop, and six soldier-martyrs of Scythia, all brought from the East to enrich this chapel, which was finished by Theodorus, the successor to John IV. But modern deformations have left little of its olden architecture unaltered; and a tastelessly obtrusive altar-piece now obstructs the view of its most interesting

art-adornment, the mosaics occupying both the apse and the entire field above the chancel arch. While it betrays decline this work still evinces the prevalence of classic traditions; distinguished by a noble simplicity of treatment, and religious earnestness in expression: central to the apse is the half figure of the Saviour in act of blessing, represented as mature in age, with long dark hair, and somewhat stern majesty of aspect—an ideal far superior to that of the same Divine subject in Roman mosaics of the V century. At each side appears a colossal Angel with fair and florid countenance and party-coloured wings, hovering amidst bright clouds: below, full-length and with arms extended in prayer, is the Virgin Mother, here an aged personage with white hair; her dress a purple mantle, long veil, and stole marked with the cross; a Greek cross also embroidered on her bosom: laterally to her stand two groups of several figures: St. Peter and St. John the Baptist (each holding a cross-headed wand), St. Paul with a richly bound book, St. John the Evangelist (also with a book in jewelled cover), St. Venantius, St. Domnus, both in episcopal vestments—all these figures with names above; — one other wanting the name, who is introduced last among the group to the left, in the same ecclesiastical costume, and holding the model of a church, being, no doubt, intended for Pope John IV, here seen in his capacity as founder of the sacred building with the usual distinction given to such pontific benefactors in mosaic grouping. At the sides of the archway, external to the apse, stand eight other Saints, all with names inscribed—Palmianus, Julius, Asterius, Anastasius, Maurus, Septimius, Antiochianus, Cajanus; five being in long white vestments with purple borders, each holding a folial crown—one only (Anastasius) distinguished by a classic mantle in cloth-of-gold; two, Asterius and Maurus, by the sacerdotal chasuble, alb, and stole — one with a scroll, the other with a jewelled book in the hand; no mitre distinguishing the bishop from the lower clergy; nor any special ornaments marking out the Pope among the other

Prelates. Above, also lateral to the arch, are the four symbols of the Evangelists, not indeed the floating majestic creatures elsewhere seen, but small half-lengths, each within a quadrate gilt border: and at the angles, the mystic cities, Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Below are the following verses in mosaic letters:

*Martyribus Christi Domini pia vota Iohannes  
Reddidit antistes sanctificante Deo.  
Ac sacri fontis simile fulgente metallo,  
Providus instanter hoc capulxit opus:  
Que quisque gradiens et Christum pronus adorans,  
Effusasque preces impetrat ille suas.*

And we may notice a religious peculiarity in this mosaic, that it is the first, in any Roman church, where the Virgin Mother appears as central, and therefore principal personage in a group of Apostles and Saints - not indeed as the crowned Queen of Heaven, or herself the object of devotional regard, but the motherly intercessor, or ideal personification of the Church. Much has the feeling towards her to be developed before (as we see in later ages), a potent mediatorial office, nothing less than co-participant in the glories of the Redeemer, became ascribed by imaginative faith to her who was henceforth scarce less than a goddess to mediaeval devotion.

The chapel adjoining that of S. Venanzio was originally the atrium of this Baptistry, converted into its new character by Pope Anastasius IV, about 1153; still retaining on its façade a rich variety of marble and porphyry details, cornices, columns, and finely chiselled friezes, the spoils from some classic antique, here fitted together in absolutely barbaric confusion. This whole construction was once an open portico, now tastelessly deprived of that character by the building up of the intercolumnations; and from a garden on one side we perceive how awkwardly adjoined to the more ancient is this later edifice—how rude the masonry in which it is built.

Another curious example of the architecture of this period, is the church *SS. Quattro Coronati* on the Coelian Hill, rebuilt by Honorius I; though scarcely (as it now exists) to be considered a work of that Pope: referred by some writers to still earlier origin (by Onofrio Panvinio to the IV century), it was successively restored by several Popes in the VII, VIII, and IX centuries; and finally rose again from ruin about the year III, under Pascal II, after being almost, if not totally, destroyed in the fire caused by the Normans, 1084. The church of *S. Adriano*, the second in order of time raised on the Roman Forum, is another building of Honorius I, long mistaken by antiquarians for some remnant of classic architecture, but much too inferior to be referred to any other than an epoch of decline like this we are considering.

The mosaics of this century form its principal record among Rome's sacred monuments; and to visit that next in interest after the example above noticed, we may take one of the pleasantest walks in this City's immediate environs, following the Nomentan Way beyond the *Porta Pia* till we arrive at *S. Agnese*, so often restored, yet still so perfect a type of the ancient Basilica. This is now the scene of a magnificent annual celebration, on the 12th of April, in honour of the return of Pius IX from Gaeta, 1850, and also of the preservation of his life, 1856, from a dangerous accident within the decaying monastery, since that period restored, as has been the church itself, and again become the home of a religious community (Lateran Canons). The Basilica was erected, about A. D. 324, by Constantina, supposed the daughter of the Emperor Constantine; restored (perhaps in its totality) by Pope Symmachus, about the beginning of the VI century; and again renewed (about A. D. 626) by Honorius I, among whose donations and adornments the mosaic of the apse is especially noticed by Anastasius — *fecit aulam et absidam basilicæ ex musico ubi multa alia dona obtulit*. This composition contains only three figures: the Virgin Martyr, in splendid costume, with a diadem and broad collar of jewels,



a kind of stole flowing in front of her purple robe ; one hand holding a scroll ; beside her , two Popes ( Symmachus and Honorius ) , the latter holding the model of this church , the former a jewelled book , both vested alike in purple chasuble, alb , and stole embroidered with crosses : the tonsure conspicuous on the heads , the beard short and curly ; but no mitre yet introduced. A hand , the symbol of Deity , holds a jewelled crown above St. Agnes's head ; and at her feet are flames, lambent round a low platform on which she stands. The face of this central figure is utterly insipid and doll-like ; the others have character somewhat more like nature. The costume of St. Agnes reminds of St. Jerome's denunciations against the toilet-luxuries of Roman ladies in the IV century, who pencilled their eyebrows with black lead, painted their faces with ceruse and purple, piled up artificial curls on their heads, and loaded brow, neck, bosom with gold and pearls ( « polire faciem purpurisso, et cerussa ora depingere, ornare crinem, et alienis capillis turritam verticem struere » ); though the intention, in sacred Art, was thus to present the saintly female *not* in mundane pomp, but as adorned for celestial triumph. to appear as befits the chaste Bride of Heaven.

Another walk, in different direction, leads us to a church that has almost ( through transforming modern works ) ceased to be in any sense a monument of the age in which it was restored, and endowed, by Honorius I — the basilica of S. Pancrazio, founded by Symmachus about A. D. 500, and to which St. Gregory annexed a Benedictine monastery. The tomb of St. Pancratius, an orphan boy of Phrygian birth, who was beheaded on the Aurelian Way at the age of 14, and interred in the Catacombs below this church, had become a favourite place of pilgrimage long before this basilica was founded. Gregory of Tours mentions the usage, in his time, of taking solemn oaths at the altar here, in the idea that if any perjured himself instant death would follow through the avenging power of that Saint. We have to regret the loss of the mosaic, as well as the other precious gifts with which

Honorius enriched this edifice, whose recent fate was to be outrageously desecrated during the siege of Rome—again restored after those vicissitudes of the year '49.

Hitberto had stood with its architecture mainly intact (however despoiled by Gothic and Vandal invaders) that superb Temple of Venus and Rome, designed by its imperial founder, Hadrian. Honorius had no scruple in depriving it of the whole roofing of gilt bronze tiles (with the requisite permission from the Emperor Heraclius), in order to use such material for covering the Vatican Basilica; and after this spoliation the natural process of decay could not have failed soon to reduce the doubly-dedicated fane to the state in which we now see it—a mere brickwork remnant of two cellae, on the spacious platform, strewn with broken columns, overlooking the Colosseum, where part of this ruin is now enclosed within the garden of an Olivetan monastery. The consecration of the Pantheon to Christian worship leads us to pause before that noblest of Rome's classic edifices, thus collaterally associated with the events of the seventh century; though as superior to all this age was capable of producing as is the poetry of Virgil to the early attempts of monkish rhyme.

The *Christian* dedication of Agrippa's Temple was effected A. D. 608 (or 610) by Pope Boniface IV, with permission, requisite even to the already powerful Roman bishop, from the Emperor Phocas. Since the year 399 it had remained shut, in consequence of the decree of Honorius, requiring all fanes of Pagan worship to be closed; another decree, of the same year, enjoining that such public buildings, in cities at least, should still be preserved entire, having saved this noble monument from irreparable ruin. The Christianized Pantheon was first consecrated to the Supreme Being, to the Virgin Mary, and all Martyrs; but in 834 was dedicated anew, by Gregory IV, to all Saints, on which occasion, it is said, was instituted the festival for universal observance on the 1st November, which for centuries continued to attract multitudes of pilgrims to its celebrations in *S. Maria ad*

*Martyres*, where the pontiffs used to hold a solemn *cappella* at Pentecost; when, during a sermon preached here before them on the mystery of that day's commemoration, showers of roses rained down from the cupola upon the antique pavement of marble, porphyry, and granite, still extant.

It is said that the original festival of that dedication, the 13th May, was changed on account of the difficulty in supplying food for the vast concourse of strangers then assembled to worship at this church, led by the, no doubt, increasing devotion towards Martyrs and Saints that characterized the age; and therefore was determined the transfer to the 1st of November, the period when harvest and vintage have brought in their supplies sufficient for residents as well as visitors at Rome. But the tide of devotion has taken other direction; the Pantheon is now one of the least-frequented churches; and even the celebration of All Saints collect no large assemblage under this majestic dome. I have seen here the installation of the Cardinal Titular (an impressive ceremonial peculiar to Rome); and on such occasion the vicissitudes of the noble edifice naturally occurred to the mind in all their wondrous realities. The fiery cross that burns within its pillared atrium in the illuminations for the 12th April (the anniversary above noticed), is a sublime symbolism most happily devised by the Roman pyrotechnics.

A spectacle yet novel was beheld at the new dedication of this edifice—the transfer of Martyrs' relics, filling no less than twenty-eight cars, brought from catacombs by order of the Pope (perhaps the earliest instance of such « translation »), as an extraordinary means for consecrating the fane rescued from « Demon-worship ». The epitaph of Boniface IV, one of the most ancient extant on Papal tombs, now in the crypt of St. Peter's, records in somewhat barbaric verse this memorable proceeding :

Tempore qui Phocæ cernens templa fore Romæ  
Delubra cunctorum fuerant quæ demonorum (sic)  
Hic expurgavit sanctis cunctisque dicavit.

The rotunda-form had already been adopted for churches in Rome, and certainly with fine effect, as not only in the beautiful *S. Stefano Rotondo* on the Coelian Hill, but in another, at the foot of the Palatine, long supposed a Pagan temple, either of Romulus or Vesta, in its Christian character dedicated to St. Theodore, an Asiatic, who suffered martyrdom in Pontus. Antiquarian science has established, beyond doubt, that this building is not of Pagan origin, but referrible to the VII, or perhaps the latter years of the VI century, being first mentioned among deaconal churches under the pontificate of St. Gregory; and restored in 774, to which date belong the mosaics still on its apse. Here do Roman mothers still bring sick children to be touched by the priests and cured by St. Theodore, as was the ancient usage, in hope of similar benefit from the gods, in the temple of Romulus.

In no example of Rome's Christian architecture is the style of this period so well preserved as in the now most forlorn and neglected basilica of SS. Vincent and Anastasius, at the *tre fontane*, (*ad Aquas Salvias*), on the site of St. Paul's martyrdom, and about a mile and a half beyond his magnificently consecrated tomb. Founded by Honorius I, this once-renowned church was so far decayed as to require restoration in the XIII century, when it was consecrated anew by Honorius III, 1221; and some details pertaining of the Gothic—as the groined vaulting of the aisles, — may be fairly ascribed to the later constructions. But the severe simplicity, the massive and sombre style still predominant bespeak the ideas and worship of the VII century. Such is the expression of the plain and rude, yet interesting features of its architecture. the heavy square piers, low-browed arches, dim-lit apse under a low vaulting, disproportionately high attic, and narrow arched windows with marble plates pierced by round cavities, the antique contrivance for giving light without glass and partially excluding the outer air; these orifices having been, probably much later, provided with the glass that now fills them. Neglect, damp, and mildew have added to



the mournfulness of the interior ; the naked rafters of the ceiling are almost black from age ; the pavement of the floor which has lost its equal level, is covered with dark stains ; and except the indifferently-executed frescoes of Apostles , colossal figures on the pilasters along the nave ( said to be from designs by Raphael ), no modern adornment interferes with the stern and simple character of antiquity. The exterior presents curious details in style and masonry : a rude irregular mixture of stone and brickwork , plain cornice mouldings with small marble brackets, numerous narrow windows without framework, and atrium with pent-house roof, rafter ceiling , and heavy Ionic columns supporting an architrave. The monastery attached to it accords with this church in its gloomy decay and partly Gothic style ; and a cloister, with arcades supported by marble colonnettes, exhibits an early mediaeval character. Deserted during four months, from the end of June, every Summer, by the Franciscan community to whom it belongs, this place looks like the desolate retreat of a fever-stricken region, a home for the dead rather than the living ; and we may imagine the wild solitude of the life led here during eight months of the year by friars dependent on alms ! It is not merely the unique aspect of an architecture quite untouched by modern alteration that gives interest to this old edifice, but, much rather, the evidence it affords to the spirit of a worship so different from that of the Italian Church at this day, at least if the sacred building itself can be admitted as voice and witness from the Past. One of the striking objects on the Roman Campagna, that cluster of churches and monastic buildings in the midst of their quiet valley, girded by undulating slopes rather than hills — a desolate, yet a green and pleasant place in the Spring season — suddenly presents itself to our view from an ascent in the road beyond St. Paul's — a forlorn retreat indeed, yet one that still reminds us of those sanctities and hospitalities when « Paradise was opened in the wild » thanks to such cloistral homes.

The close of the pontificate of the great and good S. Gregory I forms a point of time at which we may pause to consider the now developed action and aspects of Christianity at Rome. Of that Pentiff Gibbon says that « he defined the model of the Roman Liturgy, the distribution of the parishes, the calendar of festivals, the order of processions, the service of the priests and deacons, the variety and change of sacerdotal garments » ; adding ( what is certainly exaggeration ) that the Canon of the Mass, in which he daily officiated, was more than three hours in length ! The traditional nucleus of that noble and affecting Liturgy is referred to Apostolic antiquity, even in some imagined degree to St. Peter himself ; and from of old was handed down (long unwritten) till the time of Pope Gelasius (A. D. 492), who was not the author but amplifier of the Canon thenceforth known by his name, and in constant use till a third compilation had been prepared by St. Gregory, who, however, did not set aside, but remoulded, with condensation and improvement that earlier form of worship, so that he may be regarded as, rather than any other, entitled to credit for the authorship of the Mass now celebrated at every altar of the Latin Church (Maringola, *Antiq. Christ. Institutiones*, v. 1). By him was introduced the *kyrie eleison*, that supplication lifted heavenward by divine music on such strains of adoring rapture : and the words « *diesque nostros in tua pace disponas* », added by him during the Longobard siege, are the enduring record of a tragic crisis to Christian Rome. The two schools for ecclesiastical music founded by him, one at the Lateran, the other at St. Peter's, continued permanent institutions, and no doubt contributed much to the dignity of public worship, which had now acquired a character of splendour perhaps scarcely ever surpassed, at least in olden time. Dazzling illuminations distinguished the more solemn days in the sanctuary, where countless lights, sometimes 365 in a single candelabrum, used to be kindled, and might have reminded of the beautiful lines that describe such lustre in the holy place, by St. Paulinus (*Nat. S. Fel. V.*) :

Ast alii pieti accendant lumina ceris ,  
 Multiferos cavis lychnos laquearibus aptent ,  
 Ut vibrent tremulas funalia pendula flammæ.

The religious use and veneration of images, firmly established before the end of the VI century ( see Gibbon ch. XLIX ), now supplied to Rome's worship one of its conspicuous elements ; though indeed , as above observed , there is no reliable proof whatever that the usage of carrying St. Mary's picture in procession has precedent or sanction in example given by St. Gregory. In regard to this startling novelty , which opened the gates to such endless scandals , to so many childish and mischievous superstitions , hut at the same time prepared the way for the redeeming influences and noblest agency of Art , we should remember , for the honour of the Clergy , that opposition to image-worship came from not few ecclesiastical sources , even before the great iconoclast conflict in the East. Gregory himself had occasion to remonstrate with a bishop of Marseilles , who had determined to destroy certain pictures of Saints in his cathedral ; and whilst commending whose zeal for purity of worship , the Pontiff advises ( but does not *command* ) that those sacred paintings should be left , because such art-objects served as the books of the ignorant — *frangere easdem imagines non debuisse judicamus*. It is evident that many enlightened pastors had by this time been constrained , through the novel tendencies of Christian practice , to ask themselves the question , whether what was soul-destroying idolatry in the Pagan could be laudable piety in the true believer ? The ever ready answer seems to have been , that what man had beheld man might represent ; nor is there any reason to suppose that those offensive representations of the Supreme Being , the Invisible , later admitted in Italian art , were attempted or would have been endured at this period. The gradual , and on the part of the ecclesiastical body itself , perhaps unconscious transmutation of Christian worship from a sublime spirituality , abhorrent

of every contaminating shadow, suspicious of every symbol derived from Paganism, into a mystic pomp, still indeed retaining its original and purer elements, but enveloping them in a mantle of forms, partly borrowed from Judaic, partly from mythologic usage — this is, indeed, among signs of the times full of deep significance, and portentous for the future, in the eventful period here considered.

Within little more than two centuries after the death of Gregory I, the honours since so often paid to relics of the canonized were bestowed on his remains, now removed from their original place of sepulture in the atrium of St. Peter's to an altar within that church by Gregory IV; and those relics were, for the last time, beheld in the year 1603, when, that altar being demolished, they were taken thence to another more splendid tomb in the new basilica, in the chapel dedicated to him by Clement VIII.

The practice in regard to Relics during that Saint's own time was extremely different from what it afterwards became; for the reverential feeling of that age shrunk from the idea of dividing, distributing, or sending to distant places the remains of the holy dead; and it was usually but a handkerchief or veil that had been laid on the sacred tomb, or flowers so consecrated, or even the dust gathered from such spots, or (more frequently) the oil that had burned in lamps before Martyrs' shrines, that used to be sent as a gift from prelates, or carried away by devout visitors. Filings from chains, instruments of torture, and even the collected blood of Martyrs, were indeed admitted in the same category; and the enshrining of entire bodies in altars was certainly permitted at this period. Gregory himself sent the bones of a Saint to Britain, for the consecrating of one of the first churches founded by Augustine; but there are passages in his writings where he reprobates the « dividing » of revered remains; the custom of swearing upon which is exemplified in his injunction to the chief citizens of Ravenna that, in order to decide a question respecting the right of their Archbishop to



wear the pallium on all occasions, they should assemble round the tomb of St. Apollinaris, and make solemn oath, each laying one hand on that shrine, whether or not such privilege had of old been exercised.

In the year 600 the principal Clergy of Rome were thirteen Cardinal Archpriests, and twenty-five Cardinal Priests. The pontific court (if such term can yet be applied) now consisted exclusively of ecclesiastics, according to the reform carried out in its organisation by Gregory, who created the seven principal offices of « Curia » : Primicerius, Secundicerius, Arcarius, Sacellarius, Adminiculator, Primicerius Defensor, Protoscrinarius. Before turning away from a period of Papal story so interesting, I may cite the anecdote given by an old chronicler that well illustrates the manners of the pontificate at its highest phase : A Persian Abbot had come to Rome, eager to see and revere the Pope whose praises had sounded throughout Christendom. Waiting in a street where Gregory was to pass, he knelt on his approach, but the Holy Father, so soon as he perceived this, knelt also, embraced the Abbot, and declared he would not rise till the other had also risen. When both stood up, other greetings ensued, and the Pope gave money to the stranger, gave orders to his attendants that he should be comfortably lodged so long as he remained in Rome. St. Gregory must have been taking exercise on foot in those wretched and ruin-encumbered streets, such as we may picture to ourselves in the Rome of this age; and the scene is indeed in striking contrast to what a Papal cortege presents in those streets at present !

Sabinianus, the successor to Gregory, was not recognised by the Emperor, and therefore not consecrated, till six months after his election; and this dependance on the Byzantine government shows how far was the Roman See from any self-supporting political position, even after having been so advanced in credit by its last occupant. This pontificate contrasted unfavourably with the preceding. Instead of the unbounded and unconditional charities, systematically exer-

cised during fourteen years, the granaries of the Church were now opened to the poor, only when required by urgent necessities, for the *sale* of their stores. When the suffering citizens tumultuously demanded that those whose lives had been so often preserved by Gregory, should not be left to perish for want, the Pope answered, from a window of the Lateran: « *Cease your clamours*: — if Gregory gave you bread in order to gain your praises, I am not in condition to satisfy you at the same price ».

Sabinianus is, of all Popes sketched in character by History, the first in whom we find absolute baseness and malignity. Instead of emulating the virtues of his predecessor, he sought to blacken his memory, to misrepresent his actions; and even went so far as to determine on the destroying of all his writings; only deterred from this, as is said, by the interposition of a deacon, who swore that he had seen a dove hovering at the ear of St. Gregory whilst he wrote! Legend soon invented the vengeance deserved, representing how this Pope met with his death in consequence of a stroke on the head given him by the Saint in a vision, after thrice thus appearing, but in vain, to admonish him to desist from his ignoble calumnies!

We read that, at his funeral, the procession, instead of passing direct from the Lateran to St. Peter's, left the City by the Asinarian gate and made the circuit of the walls, so as to cross the Tiber by the Milvian bridge before reaching its destination—how else to be accounted for save by the fear of some outburst of popular ill-feeling against Sabinianus even at this solemn moment? One good thing to be noted of him, though in no moral sense, is that he introduced the use of bells in churches—that happy device whereby (as Chateaubriand observes) a blow upon metal awakens one and the same feeling in a thousand hearts, and the winds and clouds are charged to be the bearers of human thought!

Boniface III, who occupied the See but for eight months, obtained what Pelagius II and Gregory had desired in vain—an im-

perial decree that for ever set aside the claims of the Patriarch of Constantinople to the title « Oecumenical Bishop »; and it is remarkable how purely in the light of political arrangement is the supremacy of the Roman See now presented by this act of Phocas, the Byzantine despot, prescribing that the Headship of the Christian Church should be held to be attached to the chair of St. Peter — a transaction thus narrated by Anastasius: *Hic obtinuit apud Phocam Principem ut sedes Apostolica beati Petri Apostoli caput esset omnium Ecclesiarum, id est Ecclesia Romana.*

Deusdedit is another of the Popes enrolled among Saints, out of regard for the distinctions of eminent piety. Boniface V, also a most virtuous Pontiff, confirmed, or restored, the right of sanctuary, an ancient privilege, securing inviolate asylum in the place of worship (v. Platina); also decreed that the punishment of sacrilege should be excommunication, and forbade the relics of martyrs to be touched even by any in holy orders lower than the subdeaconate. The work begun by St. Gregory for the conversion of England was promoted by him through a mission to Edwin, king of Northumbria; addressing letters to whom, Boniface used his best arguments to persuade that still Pagan prince to become Christian, and at the same time congratulated his wife, Edelburg, for having set that example to her lord; these letters accompanied by presents for each—to the king a mantle and tunic embroidered in gold; to the queen, a silver mirror and an ivory comb with golden ornaments.

The munificent Honorius I left a memory subjected to the (for a Pope) extraordinary humiliation of being condemned by sentence of a General Council in the East (that called *in Trullo*), more than forty years after his death, — « not indeed as a heretic » (says Pagi) « but as a favourer of heretics ». Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, had written to him in defence of the monothelite doctrine that ascribed only one will and one operation, united with two natures, to Christ: « it were better, he advised the Pope (honest, perhaps, in adopting

the point of view of plain good sense), to impose silence on this disputation in regard to questions alike abstract and profitless, as thus may be facilitated the return of schismatics into the bosom of the Church ». Honorius sent an answer that concludes:—« As for us, we confess one sole will in CHRIST JESUS; and we ought to reject these novel terms that scandalise the Church, for fear that the simple-minded, struck by such a term as that of two operations, may imagine us to be Nestorians or Eutychians, unless we acknowledge one sole operation ». Muratori is satisfied that « Baronius, Bellarmino, Natalis Alexander, Pagi, and other esteemed writers have so well defended the innocence and orthodox belief of this Pope, that it would be superfluous to dispute further on the subject » (*Annali*, ann. 634). But while we accept that full justification of the estimable Honorius, we may observe in the procedure of the Council a significance far indeed from being reconcilable with the startling theory of personal infallibility later advanced by Papal champions. It is to be added, however, that even the authenticity of the act of the Council that condemned this Pope has been called in question (v. Onofrio Panvinio, *Annotations to Platina*). The authors of the « *Art de vérifier les Dates* », are indeed disposed to attribute to the letter of Honorius, addressing the Patriarch, the character of a decretal: and own that « it won for him an anathema from the sixth General Council »—the very words of which sentence convey distinct reproof against « the late Bishop of ancient Rome, because, in his letter to Sergius, he is found to have followed the error and justified the doctrine of the latter » (v. Cantù, *Storia Universale*, ch. XII) (1).

(1) Still stronger are the terms in which, before the close of the same century, another Pope reprobates this act of his predecessor: « We anathematize alike those inventors of new error, and also Honorius, who did not illumine this Apostolic Chair with the doctrine of Apostolic tradition, but by a foul betrayal attempted to subvert its spotless faith » (Leo II, in Mansi, XI, 4037: Pusey, « Eirenikon »).



Another circumstance, ensuing not long afterwards, must be noticed by the impartial observer as instancing that want of consistency apparent in the opposite sense with which Popes severally acted, one departing from the standing-point of another; and as these contradictions caused no recorded movement or onset from hostile ranks at the time, they lead us to the conclusion that the idea of a personally-claimed or divinely bestowed infallibility was wanting alike to the Popes themselves and to their most zealous advocates in these ages! We find Sergius I, a Pontiff of resolute character, refusing even to read, much less sanction, the acts of the Council « in Trullo »; and, about eighteen years subsequently, John VII, a Greek, yielding on this point to the prayers or threats of Justinian II. Theodore, a Greek (642-9), was the first Pope to introduce into the Latin Church a Byzantine usage that forms portentous evidence to the progress of a fierce bigotry tending to set aside all human sympathies, all kindly feelings, in the pathway of ascendant orthodoxy—forgetful of the worship of Love, to raise to supreme place in religious regards that objective and definable Truth which is not God, nor to be adored as God. The Byzantine Patriarch, named Pyrrhus, having repaired to Rome to go through the ceremonial of abjuring his monotholite errors, it was naturally desired to give pomp to a proceeding in which reconciliation with the Pope seemed to imply reconciliation with the Catholic Church; and in presence of all the Clergy, that Patriarch was enthroned at St. Peter's, opposite to the Pontiff, beside the high altar; a formal renunciation was made, and Theodore gave money to his guest for distribution among the people. But soon afterwards Pyrrhus threw off the mask, and whilst at the court of Ravenna again professed the monotholite doctrines he had cast aside at Rome. The Pope, desiring to make a solemn example, again summoned all the Clergy to St. Peter's, and pronounced formal anathema against the Patriarch, after which dread sentence, the document containing it was subscribed upon the tomb of the Apostle, with ink in which

had been poured drops of sacramental blood from the chalice! It is satisfactory to know that learned theologians have disputed the propriety of *thus* using those holiest elements.

Not only was requisite for the validity of Papal election the ratification of the Emperor, but also the subordinate assent of the Exarch; to both which authorities appeal had to be made in official formula, that to the Greek representative at Ravenna more emphatic and deferential even than that to his master at Constantinople. In one instance a whole year passed before the elect, Benedict II, received the confirmation without which he was not held to be legitimately installed in St. Peter's Chair. And it is observable that the popular element was still officially reognized in the aggregate whence that important choice proceeded; as the authorized electors of the Pope are enumerated under the classes of Clergy, Judices (a phrase now of wide significance), Army, styled *felicissimus exercitus*, and people. The dispositions towards the Papacy and the political morality of that Exarchate government are aptly exemplified in the transactions after the death of Honorius, during the interval, prolonged for nineteen months, before his successor, Severianus, could be installed (638-40).

The Greek troops in Rome having been long left without pay, the Exarch Isaac came to an understanding with Mauritius, *Chartularius* (or Registrar) of the imperial government, for supplying the deficient funds through a device that reminds of the worst proceedings of Turkish subordinates under rapacious pashas. When the soldiers tumultuously demanded what was due, Mauritius declared himself unable to satisfy them, but added that in the Lateran treasury were immense riches heaped up by Honorius, means serving for no purpose, and which might very well be employed for the benefit of those on whom depended the safety of Rome. The populace were stirred up to take part in the outrage thus suggested; but as the inmates of the palace offered vigorous resistance, and Mauritius (it seems) feared to make himself responsible for

massacre, a beleaguer of three days, by the troops and populace, ensued. Meantime Mauritius called council of the *Judices* (a term implying not only the authorities of the Law, but all high officials and magnates), and, after listening to their advice, set the imperial seal on the sacred treasure-house, and sent report of the proceeding to Ravenna. Thence the Exarch hastened to Rome; and, after the preliminary precaution of exiling all the principal personages among the Clergy, this new Heliodorus deliberately applied himself to his robber's task, spending no less than eight days in the spoliation of the Papal treasury, whose contents, consisting, besides money, of sacred vessels and ornaments in gold and silver, were the accumulated gifts of Emperors, Princes, Pontiffs, and other donors in private station, probably led by the idea which ascribed to such bounties a mysterious virtue for the atonement of sin; though purely charitable purpose no doubt actuated many in thus offering their wealth for the relief of the poor or redeeming of captives. At last the Exarch made distribution of his spoils—part for the pay of the troops, part for his own use, one third as a tribute to the Emperor Heraclius (1) – though some remnant, we may suppose how insignificant, was left for the Papacy.

A more revolting tragedy was prepared by the machinations of that profligate government against Pope Martin I (649-55), whose sufferings and heroic endurance well entitled him to a place among canonized Saints. This Pontiff strenuously resisted the attempt of the Emperor Constans II to impose his « Typos » as a norma of sound doctrine; and in a Council held by him, 649, were condemned, together with other heresies, the monotholite doctrine, the « Ecthesis » of Heraclius, and the above named formula of Constans. That prince ordered the Exarch Olympius to seize the Pope, and bring him

(1) Anastasius says, without further specifying, « Direxit exinde ex parte ex substantia ipsa in civitatem regiam ad Heraclium Imperatorem ».

captive, whether alive or dead. Not venturing on open violence, Olympius affected amical purposes, and desired to receive the Communion from Martin's hand, whilst he engaged an assassin to put him to death at the very moment of that act in the sacred ritual at *S. Maria Maggiore*; but the assassin failed in his task, excusing himself by the protest that he had been, as it were by miracle, prevented from seeing the Pope's person either when consecrating or communicating. Struck by remorse, the Exarch confessed his criminal purpose, was pardoned, and received in peace by the good Pontiff. But a newly-appointed representative of the same Emperor, John Calliopas, not long after these events, arrived in Rome—as usual honourably received by the Clergy; and here, on the Sunday following, entered the Lateran basilica at the head of an armed force, whilst the Pontiff, now a helpless invalid, was lying on a couch before the high altar, where it was his wish to remain at this crisis. The Exarch produced an imperial decree for the deposition of Pope Martin, and the electing of a successor; resistance might have been offered, had not the saintly father commanded that none should move to defend his cause. Conducted out of the church, while the Clergy cried « Excommunicated be whoever says, or believes, that Pope Martin has changed, or will change, a sole article of the faith! » — the unfortunate Pontiff was soon afterwards carried away by night with six attendants, and (as a chronicler add) *one* drinking glass. Embarked in a Greek ship, these captives spent three months at sea and in sojourns at different ports; after several weeks passed in the isle of Naxos, the voyage was resumed for Constantinople, where the principal victim was left in prison for three months without being seen or spoken to: at last brought before the tribunal of the Fisc, or Treasurer, a high official, he was first insulted by absurd and utterly groundless accusations; then, by order of the Emperor, carried in his infirm state (unable to stand or walk) to a public place, and there in presence of the populace stripped of his pontific vestments by the guards;



an iron halter was fastened round his neck, and in this plight was the Patriarch of the Latin Church dragged through the streets like a criminal under sentence of death, thrown into a dungeon, and left without fire or water—in an unusually severe Winter season — though for a time his sufferings were relieved by the pitying cares of women, those of the jailor's family, true to the best instinct and vocation of their sex. After he had spent 178 days in different prisons at Constantinople, into one of which he was thrown with such violence that his thighs were broken and his limbs left bleeding, this pontiff was finally conveyed to his last place of exile, the Tauric Chersonese, where, after languishing for some months in the utmost misery, he was released by death, the year after his successor, Eugenius, had been installed by imperial command; an election long delayed by the Romans, but at last consented to in the fear lest some heterodox bishop should be by compulsion intruded: the unfortunate Martin having acquiesced in this exceptional procedure, and given proof of his humility by praying for the Pastor raised to the See by right his own. It seems that Constans had determined to have his victim put to death at once, but been deterred by the prayer of a conscience-stricken Patriarch, Paul of Constantinople, himself the enemy of the Pope, who lay on his deathbed whilst Martin was prisoner. Eugenius I (655-7), also enrolled among Saints, had a brief pontificate, one of whose few known acts is an instance of those comprehensive charities in form of largess recorded of so many Popes in these ages: on his death-day this bountiful Pastor ordered a distribution of alms to all the Clergy, and to all those of his own household. A still nobler manifestation of true liberality occurs in the life of a predecessor, John IV (640-2), who, through a trustworthy Abbot, sent large sums into Dalmatia for the redemption of captives taken by Slavonian hordes recently seen as invaders in that country.

The visit of the Emperor Constans II to Rome, 663, forms a fatal epoch in the story of this City's monuments, as well as the proof how powerless was the Papacy up to this period for any resistance to oppression from its temporal masters. Pursued by remorse for the murder of his brother, whom he had first compelled to receive deacon's orders, and then without provocation caused to be put to death, this prince, the staunch supporter of the monothelite sect, and persecutor of its opponents, having resolved to quit his capital and country, began the wanderings in which his presence only brought evil to others, while restless discontent was still his own lot.

— Exul quis patria  
Se ipsum fugit? —

might he have asked with Horace.

After a baffled attempt to wrest Beneventum from the Longobards, he arrived in Rome, met by Pope Vitalianus, the Clergy, and deputies of the people, with customary pomps, crosses, banners, and torches, at the sixth mile from the walls; and on the Appian Way, where that rencounter took place one July evening, the spirits of the noble Romans whose majestic mansolea line that road—the *regina viarum*—might have looked down with indignation on the approaching despoiler. — Careful to observe all externals of imperial devotion, Constans repaired first to St. Peter's to offer his oblation to the Apostle, and on the Sunday following, a pallium, or altar-front, of interwoven silk and gold, was laid by him on the high altar in the same church, after he had attended solemn Mass and been received with all possible honours by the Pope and Chapter. Twelve days did this Emperor's visit last, and during that time was fully accomplished his object of removing every artistic ornament and sculpture that could easily be carried away, from public places and monuments. Then was the cupola of the Pantheon deprived of its entire

covering in gilt bronze; the statue of Trajan, and, as we may infer, ( v. Nibby, *Roma antica e moderna* ) many others of the same material, were removed from their ancient places. It is not mentioned what other works of art or valuables were comprised in this wholesale spoliation; but Anastasius says *all* such objects were seized and shipped for Constantinople: *omnia quae erant in aere—in regiam urbem cum aliis diversis quae deposuerat, direxit*—and it seems not impossible that (as is the conjecture of Gregorovius) those remnants of the classic libraries still preserved, of imperial foundation, were at the same time carried off by the Greeks. We read of no slightest effort at resistance on the part of Pope Vitaalianus, who lacked the spirit of a St. Ambrose in receiving, as he did with courtlike homage, the fratricide by whom his own saintly predecessor had been persecuted unto death. Constans was assassinated at Syracuse in the year 668; and all his ill-gotten wealth, the spoils of ancient Rome and other cities, was lost by shipwreck; or (as good authorities conclude) destined after a short interval to become the prey of Saracens on their first invasion of Sicily. It may be noticed that Pope Deodatus, 672-6, of whom little is otherwise known, was the first to use the now-established formula—*salutem et apostolicam benedictionem*, and to date by the years of the Pontificate instead of the Emperor's—a significant change in style!

Under Pope Domnus ( or Donus ), 676-8, was accomplished one of the triumphs of the Roman See over an antagonism by no means uncommon hitherto; though it is indeed an extraordinary fact that the Papacy met with so little obstacle from similar sources, was enabled to attain its supreme ascendancy with so few oppositions—an evolving of its potent ecclesiastical system indeed so marvellous, and favoured by such combinations of circumstance, political, popular, intellectual, that we cannot wonder at the impression eventually made on the Christian mind in general of an absolute Divine origin, an imprescriptible and ever-enduring right in this great Institution.

The Archbishops of Ravenna long represented that spirit of independance in the Church's high places, which naturally flowed from the inquiring action of mind as to the origin and title of such supremacy. From the Emperor Constans II had been obtained an edict declaring the See of Ravenna independent of the jurisdiction of Rome; but in 677 Pope Domnus secured the revocation of this from the more amicable Constantine Pogonatus. The offending Archbishopric, « after having severed itself from the Roman Church in order to become self-subsistent, again subjected to itself to the ancient Apostolic See », says Anastasius; and the schism (so styled) of Ravenna was thus brought to a term, though we shall again hear of the recalcitrant conduct of her once-powerful Prelates at later periods. The next Pope, Agathon (678-82), effected a much more important reform in obtaining legal exemption from the burden of a heavy tax (1), imposed on the Roman See for payment to the Emperor, as price of his sanction to the election. But Constantine Pogonatus, in making this large concession, still reserved the imperial right to confirm before the final seal of legality could be set on the appointment to St. Peter's Chair by consecration.

During the few months that the See was occupied by Leo II (682-3), a learned, pious, and charitable Pastor, application came from Constantinople that a permanent representative of the Pope, invested with full powers, should be henceforth appointed as resident at that capital; but Leo, acting with the cautious reserve ever a characteristic of Papal policy, complied in part only with this demand by sending a subdeacon in the usual capacity of *Apocrisarius*, — not bearing that higher character of Legate à Latere, but restricted to the functions of suggesting and counselling whatever might be deemed conducive to religious interests; the Pontiff reserving to himself all final decisions according to the reports

(1) According to the *Art de vérifier les Dates*, 3000 gold solidi, about 61,000 francs.



made by this minister, or « Nuncio ». During a short Pontificate ( 683-5 ), Benedict II witnessed another forward movement for the interest of the Roman See in the constitution granted by Constantine Pogonatus to authorize henceforth the consecrating of each Pope so soon as elected, without the delay of waiting for imperial sanction—a concession, however, which seems to have been revoked by that Emperor's son and successor, Justinian II.

The eventful pontificate of the energetic Sergius I, 687-701, brings us to the close of this century. On the death of Conon (a saintly old man who sat on that throne but eleven months ) a turbulent schism ensued, one among other disastrous results of the envied and enviable grandeur by which St. Peter's chair was now surrounded : two rivals were supported by their several parties, — the archpriest Theodore, who obtained possession of the Lateran Palace, and the archdeacon Paschal, who installed himself in the outworks of that same post. At this scandalous crisis the conduct of the citizens, led by their chief magistrates, and other officials both of the Church and Army, evinced good sense and judgment as well as promptness. Both pretenders were set aside, and another election was commenced according to the established and indeed *quasi* democratic forms, resulting with unanimous votes in favour of Sergius, a Palermitan, then in office among the Roman parish-priests. Theodore, at once submitting, did homage to the new Pope ; but Paschal applied secretly to the Exarch with the enticement of a promised bribe for his support. That dignitary deemed it worth his while to undertake an expedition to Rome in the pretender's cause ; arriving here, he soon found how vain the attempt to set aside a legitimate election acceptable to all honest citizens, and abandoned his client, but had nevertheless the unblushing baseness to insist that his promised bribe, of 100 lbs in gold, should be paid. Sergius resisted the claim founded on a disgraceful transaction ; but at last yielded, finding it impossible to get rid by any other means of this noble Greek, who took his money

and marched off—the Pope being obliged to pledge the *candelabra* and *coronae* (pendant lamps), that burnt before St. Peter's shrine, in order to this payment. But a greater trial as well as triumph soon followed. Sergius had exasperated Justinian II by refusing not only to subscribe but even to peruse the Canons of the Council « in Trullo, » sent expressly for his sanction; and that Emperor now concerted his measures for vengeance, hoping (it seems) to renew the story of the victim Pope Martin. In 694, his *Protospatarius*, Zacharias, received commission to seize the person of Sergius, and bring him captive to Constantinople. The minister of tyranny set out for Rome from Ravenna; but to his utter discomfiture found himself followed by the army in garrison at the latter city, and by all the other troops from the towns of the Pentapolis, now leagued together *not* for support of the imperial conspiracy, but for protection of the Pontiff against insult or violence—such the moral revolution by this time accomplished against a perfidious government, and in favour of the sacred authority vested in Prelates who had indeed often acted like true fathers of their people! The *Protospatarius* arrived previous to the approach of this loyal army, on whose appearance before the City he ordered the gates to be closed, and in helpless panic fled to the Lateran palace, beseeching the protection of the Pope he had intended to arrest and lead away in bondage. Those friendly forces having soon entered by the Transtiberine quarter, and crossed the bridge of Hadrian, marched to the Lateran and demanded to see the Pontiff that his safety might be made manifest. The trembling Greek officer, invested with full powers, but now beside himself from terror, crept under the Pope's bed, though assured of his protection and means for escape. Sergius showed himself to the troops and people, amidst whose applause he took his seat on a chair called that « sub Apostolis », in front of the palace, and there addressed them with thanks and exhortations. The Lateran was not left unguarded by those loyal soldiers till the departure of the abject Zacha-

rias, driven away amid the insults of the populace, had closed this historic episode, so full of significance in regard both to the Greek Empire and the Roman Pontificate. Sergius I continued the work so signally forwarded by Gregory the Great in the developing of ritual and sacred celebrations, that probably attained considerable encrease of splendour before the close of this century.

Introducing the *Agnus Dei*, to be sung by both Clergy and people at the communion, he added one more feature to the Latin Mass, a composition so truly monumental in its character and history; and Processions with litanies were ordered by him, to proceed from the church of St. Adrian on the Forum to *S. Maria Maggiore*, for the festivals of the Annunciation, the Nativity, and the Transit (*dormitio*) of the Virgin. The accidental discovery of a relic of the True Cross, found wrapt in silk and studded with precious gems, in a silver coffer long concealed at St. Peter's, induced Sergius to institute the ceremony of adoring this relic on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross as held at the Lateran (1). A restorer and founder of Churches, this Pope bestowed precious gifts, for their sanctuaries, vessels of gold and silver, hangings of silk, etc., whose catalogue in Anastasius assists us in estimating the immense wealth now at the disposal of the Papacy. Among his restorations we read of two basilicas, which, before this period, had fallen into ruin and been left roofless — S. Euphemia, and S. Aurea at Ostia — whose decay indeed does

(1) The principal relic of the True Cross, carried away from Jerusalem by the Persians under Cosroes, after the capture of that city, was restored, A. D. 626, by the Emperor Heraclius, who himself bore it into the walls and deposited it within the cathedral where St. Helena had first enshrined it. Hence a new festival, the « Exaltation of the Cross », to this day observed on the 14th of September; and hence also a new subject for religious Art, most interestingly treated in the paintings at the two *Santa Croce* churches at Rome and Florence, by Pinturicchio and Angiolo Gaddi — the composition of the former (at Rome) indeed a masterpiece.

not speak well for the durability of such buildings as had been raised by Roman masons in the earlier centuries of Christian civilization. Another noticeable proceeding of Sergius was the removal of the body of Leo the Great from the atrium of St. Peter's, in order to its being entombed in a stately marble monument inside that church, within a chapel near the Apostle's shrine — the first instance at Rome of admission to sepulture in the interior, instead of, as formerly, in the atrium of the sacred edifice. All the Pontiffs had been hitherto buried under the same atrium since that church's origin (1). Glancing over the general aspects now acquired by the externals of worship in Rome, we have to notice one important novelty, fraught with results adding power and charm to the effects of that grandly varied system by which Catholicism has so well succeeded in acting upon the heart and imagination. Hitherto the music of the Church had been exclusively vocal; and even after the complete reform of the ecclesiastical chant by Gregory, no instrument had been heard in her worship, till Pope Vitalianus introduced what is described by chroniclers as *organa* (*adhibitis instrumentis quae vulgari nomine organa dicuntur*, as stated in the notice of this pontificate) — not probably an instrument similar to the organ of modern use, but (as St. Augustine understands that term) some other species of mechanism suited for sustaining, or alternating with, vocal performance.

The beautiful legend of St. Cecilia, whence derives the idea still current respecting her, has no admissible claim in regard to her musical skill; and the origin of this instrumental performance in churches has been contested even to Pope Vitalianus. A Council at Cologne, in the year 536, passed a decree with respect to instrumental music in churches,

(1) The earliest extant epitaph to any Pope is that of Celestine I. (422-32); all such inscriptions being in verse, and to be found in the works of Baronius, Gruter, and others (Gregorovius, « Tombs of the Popes »).



prescribing that it should be such as to excite devotion, and not any feelings of profane gaiety—a regulation whose enforcement is most desirable in the Italian Church at this day. Tertullian describes by the name « organa » an instrument with tubes, of which Archimedes was the supposed inventor;—this being the hydraulic organ, long in use before any wind instrument with keys had become known. Of that improved organ the Greeks were the most skilful fabricators; and the first seen in France was brought from Constantinople by the ambassadors of Constantine IV, who presented it to King Pepin, about A. D. 766. Such hydraulic organs seem to have been still in use in the X. century, if we may infer from what William of Malmesbury says respecting an instrument fashioned under direction of the learned Gerbert, who became Pope as Sylvester II. In the year 872 Pope John VIII wrote to a German bishop, requesting him to send to Rome an organ of the best quality with an artist capable both of constructing and playing on such instruments.

Superstition and legend continue to assume a character more and more wildly romantic. In the year 680 a pestilence broke out in Rome, raging unabated during the whole summer-season; and it was said that many had beheld one of those appalling apparitions belief in which has so often possessed the popular mind under similar calamities: at dead of night had been seen passing though the streets an Angel and a Demon, whilst, at the behest of the former, the latter struck with a spear the door of each house where the pestilence was next day to enter, the number of blows indicating that of the foredoomed victims. At last a more consolatory vision appeared to a pious citizen, intimating that if the relics of St. Sebastian were brought into the City and an altar dedicated to that martyr, the plague would immediately cease. This being communicated to the Pope, Agathon, the transfer of those relics from the catacombs was speedily effected; brought to the basilica of *St. Pietro in Vinculis*, they were placed under an altar dedicated to St. Sebastian as *Expulsor*

*Pestilentis*; which act of piety had no sooner been accomplished than the destroying angel departed! the promise was fulfilled.

Baronius states that, in consequence of these events, was given a new direction to Christian devotions; and that the Soldier Martyr became henceforth the special object of hope and trust during visitation of endemic maladies; new altars being raised, new churches erected in his honour. The idea of St. Sebastian in this character of deliverer corresponds to that of Apollo « Alexikakos »; as indeed the conception of the Saint's form, in later art, often reminds us by its youthful grace and heroic beauty of the same Pagan god in classic sculpture. This history of a new devotion, suggested by extraordinary circumstances, has still its interesting record in artistic form at that basilica of St. Peter's Chains, near the chief entrance to which the whole story is represented in a spirited fresco by Antonio Pollajolo—its several acts all brought within the compass of the same wall-picture: in the back ground we see the vision appearing to the citizen, whilst at prayer in a solitary spot at the base of a mountain; at a nearer level, the Pope and Cardinals seated in a kind of exedra, on the stairs before whose open front the same citizen is kneeling while he narrates his vision; in the foreground is the Pope, with attendance of Cardinals and Clergy, officiating among the dead or dying at the transfer of those relics; the desolation and panic well indicated by the numerous dead bodies left neglected in the street; and beyond appears the mysterious group of the Angel and Demon, the latter striking a house-door with a spear—the mediaeval notion of the horrific horn-and-hoof fiend being here strictly followed by the artist. The earlier historian's narrative (1) is given in substance in

(1) The words of Paulus Diaconus are as follows; — « Tumque visibiliter multis apparuit, quia bonus et malus Angelus noctu per civitatem pergerent, et ex jussu boni Angeli, malus Angelus, qui videbatur venabulum in manu ferre, quotiens venabulo ostium percussisset, tot de eadem domo die sequenti homines interirent ».

an old inscription still to be read beside the altar of St. Sebastian, in the left aisle of that church, where is seen the mosaic figure of that Saint, forming an altar-piece, a most interesting specimen of the art of the VII century, executed probably within a short time after the events above narrated (v. Kugler). Totally unlike the ideal of this Martyr as a beautiful and heroic-looking youth, who suffers without betraying any sense of pain, as so much more familiar to us, the St. Sebastian is here represented as an aged warrior with white hair and beard, in the gorgeous costume of a Byzantine prince—close-fitting vest, richly embroidered, with sleeves and hose, above this a long-flowing chlamys, white and purple, fastened with a precious clasp at the right shoulder, a large jewelled diadem held in both hands; the name being vertically inscribed in gold letters on a blue ground: *Scs. Sebastianus* (1).

The demolition of classic antiquities is instanced, during this century, in the procedure of other Popes besides Hono-

(1) The now insignificant church of *S. Sebastiano* on the Palatine, once attached to a Benedictine Abbey, is said to mark the site of his martyrdom in the portico called after Adonis; and is of early mediæval origin, having been at one time dedicated to St. Andrew, and in 1118 the scene of the Conclave where fifty Cardinals elected Pope Gelasius II. The « Acts of St. Sebastian », who was a distinguished soldier, and held the high rank of commander of the first Pretorian cohort under Diocletian, narrate that he did not die in consequence of the wounds from arrows by which he had been condemned to suffer; but recovered through the pious cares of Irene, the widow of another martyr, who nursed him at her own house on the Palatine Hill. Soon after his convalescence, however, he presented himself suddenly before the two Emperors, Diocletian and Maximianus, upbraiding them for their cruelty to the Christians; on which he was immediately ordered to be put to death in the Hippodrome of the palace, there being beaten with clubs till he expired, A. D. 286. The art-tradition assuming him to have been quite a young man does not consist with the fact of his military rank, nor by any means with what is said in his « Acts »: « him the soldiers revered as a father » — *quasi patrem*.

rius I. Till A. D. 687 had stood, near one extremity of the portico of St. Peter's, a majestic mausoleum, called popularly the « Sepulchre of Romulus », and described by Cencio Camerarius as incrustated with marble, in two stories, not less lofty than the mole of Hadrian. Of its marbles it was entirely despoiled by Pope Domnus in order to supply material for a new pavement to the court (*Paradisus*) of the basilica, and for restoring the staircase in front. (SEVERANO, *Memorie sacre delle Sette Chiese*). The foundations of this monument were discovered in the course of works for building the corridors and majestic colonnades of Bernini, 1667.

In the writings of St. Gregory we find no sanction to the superstition of miraculous images, nor allusion to those Madonna-pictures ignorantly ascribed to St. Luke, which (as Agincourt shows) are recognisable as of the declining Greek school in the VII or VIII century, and may be supposed to have found their way into Italy, for the most part, during the epoch of the Crusades, or after the Latin siege of Constantinople. One of these ancient and very ugly pictures, over the high altar at SS. *Cosmo e Damiano*, is associated with that Pontiff by a legend given in the following words: « Behind the altar is an image of our Lady, which, it is said, spoke to St. Gregory, and asked him why, when he passed before it, he no more saluted her as he had been wont to do? Moved by which words, the Holy Pontiff is said to have conceived greater devotion than ever towards that sacred image; and in the sequel granted to whomsoever celebrated mass at the altar before it, the power of liberating a soul from purgatory » (UGONIO, *Stazioni di Roma*). A popular practice to this day kept up, is said to have had origin from the counsel of St Gregory during the visitation of pestilence in 590, that, as sneezing was one symptom of incipient disease, it should be followed by the ejaculatory prayer from all by-standers, « God save thee » — hence the « salute », after any one has sneezed, in Rome's social usage still prevailing.



Another of those ghastly legends that make the burning volcano represent the infernal abyss, is mentioned by Platina and other biographers of Popes. In the time of Domnus some holy man saw the soul of the Frankish king, Dagobert (deceased 647 therefore many years before this pontificate) suspended in air by Demons above the crater of Lipari, but, after mysterious conflict, rescued by the saints Denis, Martin, and Maurice, whom that prince had revered as his patrons, and whose churches he had embellished or restored. Whoever has contemplated the sublime terrors of the volcano may enter into the mediaeval idea respecting these awful phenomena; and it struck me, when I was so fortunate as to witness the fiery outbursts both of Etna and Vesuvius in all their dreadful grandeur, that the theory long so ascendant over the Christian mind, and so often rendered by art, which ascribes a material nature to the punishments of the invisible world, has borrowed much in pictorial detail from these physical realities.

More instructive are the legends mentioned by Mabillon, in the Benedictine annals of this century, respecting the election of bishops by direct revelation: thus at Lyons, where it was the custom, whenever the see became vacant, to observe a fast of three days in the hope of divine guidance; after one of which intervals during that church's widowhood an Angel appeared to a child, intimating that a holy man, named Eucherius, should be the chosen one, as he accordingly was; and thus at Orleans was St. Anianus raised to the see in obedience to the proclamation made by an infant not yet possessed of natural speech! — stories that at least convey a truth respecting the apostolic liberty and independent action still enjoyed by the great prelacies, and conformable with ancient discipline.

The intellectual standard of this age seems to have been very low — is but the natural result of long raging war and repeated invasion. It is probable that the great majority of citizens were quite ignorant of literature; that few even

among the clergy were in any sense educated. In the synod held by Pope Agatho, 680, one hundred and twenty-five Italian bishops drew up a letter to the emperor in which they lament the prevailing ignorance, and the utter failure of individuals who could be said to have attained the summit of science; testimony similar to which is given by that Pope, who, writing to the same sovereign, regrets that even the envoys he was sending to Constantinople scarce possessed the learning adequate to the charge he had given them. Pope Leo II, a Sicilian, who occupied the see for less than a year, (682), was, indeed, one eminent exception, distinguished not only by virtues and piety, but by eloquence, mastery of the Greek as well as Latin language, and skill in music. He composed a psalmody with new adaptations of hymns, and introduced improvements in the ecclesiastical chant. Though by this period the Popes had, no doubt, attained great secular power as well as riches, it does not appear that any among them had shown the spirit of worldliness; and of the good Agatho (also a Sicilian) it is said: « he was of such mildness and benevolence that no one ever was sent from his presence in sadness » (Ciaconius).

We must turn back to the preceding century in order to consider the story of a new conquest and a new kingdom in Italy, founded by invaders who alone, among all foreign masters in this land, have left an enduring name that attaches to one of her most fertile and prosperous regions. In 565 the Emperor Justinus had recalled Narses from the government of the Exarchate, and sent Longinus to succeed to him, probably because that veteran General, the conqueror of the Ostrogoths, had not extorted from his provinces as much as the Byzantine court coveted; and the insolent message from the Empress Sophia added to the provocation: « Tell Narses (she said) that it is time for him, Eunuch as he is, to come back and spin wool in the women's apartment »; to which he answered: « I will spin such a web for her as she shall never be able to unravel! » Complaints against the government of

Narses had indeed been often made, and especially from the patricians of Rome. These wrongs urged him, as is said, to the treasonable vengeance of inviting the invasion, which cost to the Greek Empire the greater part of those Italian provinces where its sway was hateful, its administration systematically oppressive (v. S. Greg. lib. IV, ep. 33, 35).

The Longobards (« Longobardi » as latinized by Paulus Diaconus<sup>1</sup>), so called either from their long beards or long battle-axes (German roots, *Bart*, beard — *Barte*, axe) were a Scandinavian race, known by another name as Wendels, who, after crossing the Baltic, had settled first in the isle of Rugen, afterwards in Pannonia, where they became allies of the Huns and Avars, and soon subdued the Gepidi, a nation now doomed to disappear from the historic page, annihilated by these more powerful northerners. It is said that Narses sent to their chiefs, as he might have done to greedy children, specimens of all the fruits that grew in fair Italy; and whatever the inducement, the invasion was promptly undertaken. The whole population, with women and children, and a heterogeneous force swollen out by 20,000 Saxons, besides Bavarian, Sarmatian, Bulgarian and subject Gepidi allies, — the amount reported as 62,000, probably that of combatants alone, — led by their valiant king, Alboin, crossed the Julian Alps in the Spring of 568 by the same pass from Carniola by which Alaric and Theodoric had first descended upon upper Italy. Soon was occupied a city, the first thus reached, Forum Julii (Cividale di Friuli), where the nephew of Alboin remained with a garrison, and the title Duke of Friuli, to govern the district as a Longobard province. Within five months after these invaders had quitted Pannonia they were masters of Milan and Verona; and within a short interval subsequent had founded the Duchies of Spoleto and Beneventum; but it cost them a siege of thirty-nine months to take the gallantly defended Pavia, where, when Alboin at last entered, he was deterred from carrying out his vows of exterminating vengeance by the stumbling of his horse as he rode

through the gates—an omen that impressed his superstitious ignorance. Other towns offered feeble resistance; and the rural populations fled to rocky mountains, islands in lakes, or sea-ports. Gloom and desolation, left in their track by wars, famine and pestilence, had overspread the sorrowing land before these new conquerors came. Presentiments and portents, seen, heard, or imagined, struck men's minds with fear in their anticipations of what may have been vaguely reported across the Alps long before any foe appeared. No voice was now heard in the fields; no shepherd piping to his flocks; no mower or reaper was seen at work, while the yellow corn ripened in the sun, and the grape grew purple on the gadding vines without hands to gather or owners to enjoy. Primaeval silence had resumed her reign (*« videres saeculum in antiquum reductum silentium »*, says Paulus Diaconus); but sounds of awful omen were heard both by day and night, like the mustering or march of mighty armies in the distance, or the blast of trumpets wakening terrific echoes in the fields of air! (Paul. Diac. lib. I, 4). Many historic tragedies mark this age.

Alboin established his court at Pavia in the palace of Theodoric; but after a few years (584) perished by the fate his ferocity had brought upon himself—like other tyrants, the author of his own ruin. At a banquet he had sent round a goblet to his wife Rosmunda, inviting her to *« drink with her father »*, that goblet being made out of the skull of one of the two Gepidi kings, her father (the other her uncle), whom he had slain with his own hand. Rosmunda drank, and had her revenge, for which she did not scruple to degrade herself, hiring the assassin who slew her husband after she had fastened his sword beyond his reach at his bedside. This heroine of atrocity then fled with two accomplices and many followers, carrying away all the treasures of the royal palace, to Ravenna, where a fate awaited her that surpasses the imagined horrors of romance. Longinus desired to wed her for her riches, and persuaded her to rid herself of the paramour



who had murdered his king at her bidding; to him she offered, as he left the bath, a poisoned cup; he drank, but, either feeling its effects, or seeing the truth in her wicked eyes, drew his sword and compelled her to drink the rest; and thus did those partners in guilt die together, each other's victims!

The Greek dominions in Italy were now reduced within the limits of the Exarchate, henceforth called Romagna (1), the Duchies of Rome and Naples, which latter soon won independence, and the extreme southern coast, part of the « *Magna Graecia* » as known to antiquity.

After the flight from Pavia, the magnates in that city elected to the throne Clefis, who prosecuted the conquests begun, and led his armies almost to the gates both of Rome and Ravenna; but was also cut off by assassination within eighteen months. To his reign succeeded an anarchic and feeble government of thirty-six Dukes, who now divided the subject provinces, and whose total want of unity, of common purpose in action, proved a check to the progress of this conquest in Italy.

Whilst the invader seemed thus weakened the Roman Senate invited a Frankish sovereign, Childibert of Austrasia, to whom they sent a bribe of 50,000 pieces (solidi?), to invade Italy for her deliverance from foreign oppression—a fatal precedent! A Frankish army under that king's standard crossed the Alps; but the Longobard magnates, alarmed at this emergency, now united for their common interest, bribed off the enemy about to attack, and restored the kingly authority they had set aside. Now was elected the son of Clefis, Autharis, a warlike prince, who traversed the peninsula as far as

(1) The cities of the Exarchate were: Ravenna, Bologna, Imola, Faenza, Ferrara, Adria, Forlì, Cesena, Comacchio, Ancona, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Sinigaglia — all, within a single century, conferred upon the Papacy, and all, within the space of a few weeks, lost by it in 4859.

Reggio, and there spurred his horse into the sea, exclaiming « Thus far reaches our Kingdom ». The Longobards, but recently converted from idolatry and the worship of Odin, had been led to adopt the Arian heresy; but their new king wedded a Catholic princess, the virtuous and much-loved Theodelinda, daughter of Garibald, Duke of Bavaria, who added to the many examples of female influence in the religious history of nations by effecting the conversion of her second husband, and through him of the great majority of the Longobard people. Left a young widow by the premature death of Autharis (under suspicions of poison), she received such proof of chivalrous loyalty from the magnates as to be allowed to bestow the crown on whomsoever she might choose to share it with. Agilulph, Duke of Turin, was the fortunate man to find favour in the gentle lady's sight, and reigned with her prosperously for twenty-five years (590-615). It was probably before his conversion that this prince laid siege to Rome (594), and reduced the City to that dire stress of which the mournful picture is drawn by St. Gregory. To him succeeded his son Adeloald, under the regency of Theodelinda, a reign unfortunate for both, as the frantic and cruel conduct of the young prince (imputed to insanity brought on by poison) excited a rebellion which drove both him and his mother from the throne; and the widow of two kings closed in sorrow (627) a life whose morning and noon had been of such unbroken sunshine. Next succeeded Rodoald, with whom Theodelinda's daughter shared the throne, and after whose death she also was invited, as had been her mother, to bestow the crown according to her choice. Rothar, who thus became king, was the last of the dynasty to return to (if he had ever renounced) Arianism; but won a certain lustre for his name by the compilation of the code of national Laws, for the first time drawn up in writing, though not indeed new, by his command (643). Another relative of Theodelinda, her nephew Aribert, raised to this throne by election, the usual procedure, set the first unwise example of dividing the Lon-

gobard kingdom, bequeathing it (661) to the joint government of his two sons, one of whom reigned at Milan, the other at Pavia. The discords that might have been foreseen ensuing, one brother invited an intervention to support him against the other; and Grimoald, Duke of Beneventum (now an independent Longobard State), came not only to fight in this cause, but to raise himself to the throne of northern Italy, after one of the contentious brothers had been cut off by assassination, the other driven into exile. The usurpation of Grimoald lasted till his death, after which Bertarid, the prince he had driven away, returned from long exile to repossess himself of the crown. A peaceful reign ensued, and till its close (688) this king proved himself benevolent, pious, a benefactor to the Church, and a great founder of monasteries.

I need not anticipate the events of another century. This alien sway, founded by unjust invasion, maintained itself in Italy for 206 years; and the most remarkable circumstance in its fate is the manner in which ruin at last overtook it, crushed beneath the ascendant power of the Papacy, whose temporal interests it had done much to promote, the very first stone of whose political sovereignty had been laid by Longobard kings. Opposing that consecrated throne, as they did after first supporting it, they drew down the tempest [that annihilated their own. The victim was requisite for the realisation of an important fact in mediaeval Christendom, and for the strengthening of a fabric once mightiest upon earth. Thus, in the great world-drama, does each group of actors contribute to bring about the momentous issues often neither aimed at nor desired by those mainly instrumental!

It is not certain at what precise date, Muratori supposes about 603, ensued the *second*, the orthodox, after the first conversion of the Longobards to a heterodox Christianity, Arianism had been received by them about the period of the birth of Alboin, and was, if not introduced, at least efficiently fostered among them by his mother, Queen Rodelinda,

niece of the Italo-gothic king, Theodatus. But many gentile practices, and perhaps still more gentile ideas, lingered in this dim sort of Christianity; it is evident that among the most ignorant of this people were still not a few idolaters, even after the establishment of the Italian kingdom, who offered sacrifice and paid barbaric worship to brutes; as St. Gregory tells (*Dialog.* III, 28) of some unfortunate peasants, captured by them near Rome, who were maltreated for refusing to adore the skull of a goat slain in their sacrifices. The Ostro-goths had been instrumental in diffusing Arianism over Pannonia (Hungary), whilst the Longobards hold those districts, and their priests were invited by Alboin to officiate in churches re-opened or built under his reign. As the Ostro-gothic Arians used neither the Greek nor the Latin in their rites, we must suppose that their language — which Troya calls « Gotico Ulfilano » — was that in which the Longobards learned to pray and their priests to celebrate. Devout Arians they probably were. The Easter of 568 was duly celebrated by their king and his attendants on the very eve of the invasion of Italy; and a sort of respect was shewn to the Italian clergy even in the first flush of triumph; as in the case of Felix, bishop of Trevigi, who boldly presented himself in the camp to petition for the confirmation of the privileges of his church and see, by Alboin at once granted, and ordered to be drawn up in legal form.

Their first-adopted policy was indeed intolerant: all the Catholic prelates were driven from their sees to give place to Arian intruders; but after a time was tried the dangerous experiment of dividing each see between a catholic and a heterodox occupant—inevitably to prove a source of troubles, though certainly a fact that shows the freedom from bigotry among good qualities of the Longobards. Autharis indeed prohibited the administering of Catholic baptism to their children. St. Gregory mentions the miraculous punishment of one of those Arian intruders, struck with blindness when in the act of taking possession by force of the cathedral at Spoleto. There



is another legend of the time that shows a degree of liberalism in these once heretical conquerors, even after their Catholic conversion. The last of their Arian kings, Rothar, had been buried in a basilica dedicate to St. John the Baptist, with weapons and treasures laid, according to custom, in his tomb. Tempted by this deposit, a robber violated that tomb to despoil it. St. John appeared to him in a vision, and told him, with severe upbraidings, that the deceased king, notwithstanding his errors in faith, had been dear to himself, the Baptist, revered as special patron of the Longobards; and that, in sign of divine wrath, he, the culprit, should never again be able to enter the church he had profaned—which Paulus Diaconus vows to have been literally fulfilled, as he had himself been witness to: for whenever that robber tried to pass the threshold of the same church, he was driven back as by a blow from a fist in his throat! — a credible example of the workings of remorse on imagination. The eagerness of the Longobards to obtain relics led them to that spoliation of the Roman catacombs which roused the intense indignation of Popes, and contributed to cause the final desertion of those hypogees by local worshippers; and one service to claim the gratitude of the Italian church, — in its results to Art, one of whose most beautiful mediæval creation it called forth, the gratitude no less of the civilized world — was the transfer of the body of St. Augustine, obtained at great price by king Liutprand from Sardinia, whither it had been brought from Hippo, the see *auffragan* to Carthage held by that Saint, by the Catholic priests driven from Africa during the Arian persecution under the Vandal king, Thrasimund. It was probably in the year 725 that these revered relics were laid in the church at Pavia, *S. Pietro in Coelo Aureo*, now ruinous, where, their silver shrine being opened in 1090, the bones were found wrapped in a silk veil together with parts of the episcopal vestments: removed finally to the cathedral of the same city, they received all honours that art could bestow in the magnificent mausoleum

wrought by two sculptors (1), and adorned by 290 figures, which was raised under the Visconti government in 1362.

The Longobardic Laws certainly do not exhibit this people in a character of barbarism or degradation: founded mainly on the *weregeld*, or pecuniary-compensation principle, they acknowledge slavery, but also admit claims of personal liberty, personal honour, and the inviolability of each man's home; they do not suppose the existence or possibility of witchcraft, but allow of ordeals in the trial by combat, through means of which it was that Theodelinda's daughter was vindicated from calumny, and restored to queenly honours after the victory won for her by a faithful servant. The honour and safety of woman was otherwise well provided for; and whilst the *weregeld* (or price of life) for man was only 900 solidi, it was 1200 (2) for the other sex.

This people were, in all probability, quite without literature, science, or skill in any arts, at the time of their first establishment in southern provinces. Yet there eventually arose under their dominion an architecture to which they gave their name, and which is stamped with a character singularly original; though we must remember that what now classes as « Lombardic » among Italian monuments is, in great part, the work of ages subsequent to their epoch in Italian story; and it is rather the genius of northern races in general than that peculiar to the Longobards which appears in edifices ascribable to them.

In their laws we find mention of those masons of Como, *Magistri Comacenses*, distinguished as a guild in the story of Italian architecture, who were hired on contract for the public works undertaken by these foreigners. In the course of the VIII century this new style of building began to be distinguished by an imaginative and fantastic symbolism utterly unlike anything yet seen, but not carried to its ex-

(1) According to Cicognara, Pietro Paolo and Jacobello of Venice.

(2) The gold solidus equivalent to francs 20, 38.

treme development till between the XI and XIII centuries, when it was, in Italy at least, in the phase of imitation, after its originators had disappeared. Its peculiar feature is the introduction of sculptures on internal or external surfaces, or inlaid work on pavements, sometimes illustrating scenes from the Old and New-Testament, but especially revelling in grotesque fantasies quite without religious import, — Syrens, Dragons, Griffins, nondescript creatures, or the Signs of the Zodiac, later admitted conspicuously among details in sacred building. One writer, Hammer (« Fundgruben des Orients ») refers these fantasies to an Oriental and Gnostic source, assuming that they were first introduced into Christian architecture, but in sense adverse to sound doctrine, by degenerate Templars in the East, who had derived them from the fanatical sect of Ismaelians, or Assassins. But a cogent objection to this theory, well urged by Ricci, is that the Templars, whose Order arose in 1128, had been long preceded by the Longobards in such architectural originalities; and that no intercourse with the East, anterior to the Crusades, can be supposed to have imported anything of the kind into a school of northern Italy. By the XII century this strange symbolism had encroached into painting as well as sculpture, and become so prominent in churches as to excite the reprobation of St. Bernard. That eloquent saint may have been right in opposing it; and yet such a marked novelty in the development of sacred architecture has a value and import of its own: it shows us the northern imagination, wild, sombre, grotesque, undergoing the Christian influence, yet still retaining its peculiar tendencies, which now find place in the service of that Religion that appropriates while it illumines what it touches, is alike at home amidst the brilliancy and splendour of the modern Italian basilica and the dim-lit aisles of the Gothic minster; and in its large comprehensiveness embraces all forms of Genius, all energies and biases of nationality. We may remember how, from early ages, Chris-

tian Legend had peopled earth and air, the desert and the ocean, with mysterious beings, ever foes to man :

Viewless, and deathless, and wondrous Powers,  
Whose voices he heard in his lonely hours —

from familiarity with the idea of which demon-intelligences, hideous when manifest, infernally evil in operations, it is not unnatural that uncultured minds should return scared and horror-stricken into the walks of reality, thus disposed to translate their visions or fears into such Art as practitioners schooled by classic teaching had hitherto never thought of, as the Clergy under the immediate guidance of Rome would not probably have sanctioned (1). The happy idea of enlisting animals into Christian service for the expression of sentiment and truth, had, indeed, its origin in the Art of the Catacombs; and as it developed itself, the place of such creatures in the sanctuary became more distinctly marked, their meaning more definite. Most conspicuous among all is the Lion, which even in Greek architecture had the assigned task of guardian to the temple, owing to the popular notion that that creature sleeps with eyes open; hence is it also placed beside the throne and the sepulchre; and the Griffin, because supposed the faithful guardian of buried treasures, has had its recognised place both in Pagan and Christian symbolism. When, as so often seen at sacred portals, the Lion or Lioness is preying upon some smaller animal, it implies the severity of the Church towards the unbelieving and perverse; but when, as frequent, such animal is sporting with a child, or sometimes with a lamb, is signified her mansuetude and patience towards neophytes and the docile-minded. Often, in the rude sculpturing, these mystic creatures look rather like dreams than realities of brute life. The characteristics of Longobard Architecture on

(1) See the lives of St. Paul the first Hermit, St. Anthony of Egypt, St. Hilarion of Palestine, in the *Leggende del secolo XIV.*



the exterior, as seen in many churches of northern Italy, are: columns, or half-columns, with clustering shafts, that rise from the base to the summit without cornice or architrave to mark the several stories; round-arched portals and windows, the former with pilasters and profuse mouldings; arcade galleries with slight shafts carried around towers, along façades, and at the highest story following the terminal lines of building above. It was probably after the *second* conversion of the Longobards that their piety took its special direction in honour of One now their chosen Patron, St. John the Baptist, to whom they dedicated churches, usually the cathedrals, in every city. When the Emperor Constans II was preparing to assail their dominion in the southern provinces, he enquired of a holy hermit (no doubt expecting infallible response) whether he could hope to see the Longobard kingdom overthrown; and was answered: « That people cannot yet be overcome, because a queen from a far country (Theodelinda) has raised on the confines of their territory a basilica to St. John the Baptist (at Monza), and thenceforth the blessed John has constantly interceded for them: but the time will come when his Oracle shall be held in contempt; and then shall that nation perish » — all which (says Paul the Deacon) « we have experienced to be true; for, before the ruin of the Longobards, we have seen the basilica at Monza officiated in by base men, and this sanctuary given up to worthless persons and adulterers, conferred no longer with regard to merit, but for the sake of payment in money ». (lib. V, 6).

To that celestial patron was dedicated one of the best preserved among Lombardic monuments, the cathedral, now Baptistery, of Florence, as to whose origin antiquarians have so much disputed; Villani and other Tuscan historians assuming it to be the identical temple of Mars, the ancient city's deity; others ascribing it to Justinian, to Theodolinda, to Gundeburga, her daughter; while Lami (chief among local authorities) determines for its date about the year 662,

and gives to the Longodard magnates the credit of having built it, in honour of their guardian saint, at their own expense. Externally the « *mio bel S. Giovanni* » of Dante must have been very unlike what we now see, when encrusted with plain stonework between its blind arches, entered by a single portal, lighted by an orifice open in its octagonal cupola, surrounded by antique sarcophagi, and elevated on steps now buried beneath the soil that has risen considerably over the entire level of old Florence — even to the height of 6, of 10, and 18 feet, as excavations have proved.

In the year 1202 was added (or commenced) the tribune which now contains the high altar, the sole altar formerly within these walls having stood opposite, at the actual entrance nearest the cathedral, where two marble columns, amidst a colonnade for the rest of granite shafts, distinguish its place. In 1293 was ordered the outer incrustation of white and green marble in panels, with pilasters and arches, first executed by Arnolfo di Cambio, and (half a century later) renewed by Agnolo Gaddi. In 1550 was closed the cupola-orifice, now surmounted by a lantern; and in 1577 was demolished the magnificent octagonal font, for Baptism by immersion, which rose on steps in the centre, adorned with a statue of St. John and reliefs illustrative of his life by Giovanni Pisano—swept away, little to the credit of the Medici who ordered this perpetration, with the trivial object of supplying space for the courtier-pomps at some grand-ducal baptism! And at the same time was destroyed the chancel of the XIII century, that projected from the high altar towards the centre, still traceable in the brick pavement on the area of that, no doubt, beautiful old structure: as the place of the ancient font is also marked by the parallel bands of marble on an octagon surface distinct from the rich tessellated pavement around.

Still remain in this interior the olden characteristics of semi-barbaric splendour, and appropriation of classic details resulting in what is utterly alien from classic style: the gra-

nite shafts of the lower file of columns unequal in scale, their gilt capitals of different orders, composite and Corinthian; the pilasters above not corresponding in site with the columns below; the source whence many fragments here used have been collected being apparent in one curious example, an antique Roman epigraph, to the Emperor Lucius Verus, set into a parapet. Yet with all these anomalies, there is in the whole structure a noble and harmonious character exemplifying the genius that, while it copies or borrows, shows the power of reducing all to accordance with its own purpose and thought, and can produce effect of vastness through varieties of form and opulence of detail. The first impression on entering is indeed quite illusory, so much larger does this edifice appear from within than from without; and this too is a genuine triumph. In the upper arcade we have here an anticipation of the triforium so conspicuous in the finest mediaeval churches, and seen in other early Italian examples, as at the Ravenna Baptistery; and one is reminded of the nobler Pantheon by the inlaid decoration in coloured marble on the walls, mostly in geometric patterns and with little regard for symmetry—barbaric indeed as compared with the similar feature in the Roman temple. Most interesting are the rich and fantastic designs on the pavement; and though this was restored in 1200, we may believe that Longobard imagination is still manifest in the strange monstrous figures interspersed with roses, wheels, stars, and triangles, in mazy labyrinth of coloured intarsio. To later restorers may be ascribed no doubt the quaint Latin verses carried round ornamental circles, and that motto (in what the Italians call *verso retrogrado*) read in the same sense both ways: *En giro torte sol ciclos et rotor igne*. On the occasion of evening rites, as for the festival of St. John, the scene here presented is impressive, for this interior seems to expand when occupied by crowds; and the masses of light and shade, when its altars are illuminated, add to the solemnity inherent in its style. Such use of antique material as we see here reminds of the edict of

Theodoric at Ravenna, directing that all fragments of architecture, marbles ec. found in the fields, should be collected and given up for the builders' use; a method similar to which may have been adopted by the Longobards at Florence. But what is most interesting is the proof here supplied that the architecture of the Christian Church, if indeed worthy of its purpose, revolves upon a principle of continual progress and renovation.

Monza (*Modicia* or *Modoetia*) owed its importance first to Theodoric, who chose it for his summer-residence; but more especially to Theodelinda, who here built a stately palace as well as one of the most renowned Lombardic sanctuaries, that of St. John the Baptist. My recollections of this quiet little town go back to the period when, in its collegiate church founded by that queen, was still exhibited, and with the same formalities as described by Lady Morgan in her brilliant « Italy », the Iron Crown, that most religiously honoured among royal insignia, which, it is to hoped, will soon be recovered from the defeated Austrians, who took care to carry it away from hence (1859) before their final expulsion from the territories once ruled by the Longobard. The actual church is of the XIII century, when Theodelinda's basilica was rebuilt on larger scale, and in the plan of the Latin instead of the Greek cross (originally preferred), by Matteo da Visconti; the façade, a later and rich specimen of the so-called *cabinet* Italian style, having been added in 1396 by Matteo di Campione, a well-known architect. Some barbaric sculptures with fantastic figures, on the column-capitals in the interior, are in the taste first displayed by the Longobards, but not more ancient than the XI century—as good judges determine. But an interesting series of reliefs, over the chief portal, are beyond doubt of the period here considered, and, if not of the time of Theodelinda, little later; indeed, from the introduction of her daughter Gundeburga's figure, in act of kneeling and with crowned head, it might be inferred that she was the commissioner of the work intended to honour both



her parents' memory, and, as probable, during the reign of her husband, Arioald (625-'36). Here we see the first example among Italian monuments of a dynasty of the land's conquerors handed down to posterity by her Art. The sculptures are, I believe, unique specimens of their period; very defective in drawing, though draperies are well-treated and heads not without character. Of two files of figures in low relief, the more important represents the Baptism of CHRIST attended by an Angel, who holds the garments, and, at the two sides, but quite apart, SS. Peter and Paul with keys and sword, another Apostle with a scroll (probably St. John), and the Virgin, a veiled matronly figure, dignified in bearing. There are singular originalities in this treatment of the baptismal scene: over the principal figure hovers a Dove with a reversed vase in its beak, from which water (unless it be meant for rays of light) flows upon the head; the St. John is in act of anointing His forehead from a vase held in one hand— a detail borrowed from the Catholic sacrament; and the waters of the Jordan, descending in pyramidal form, seem to issue from the Divine person, as if to imply that He is the source of the sacrament's virtues — an inappropriate allegory. In the upper part, we see Theodelinda offering a crown and jewelled cross to St. John Baptist, who holds a large vase (one of her other gifts?); also her husband Agilulph, her son holding a dove to his breast, perhaps as symbol of youthful innocence, and her daughter kneeling; the king wears a leafy wreath on his head, and is of younger, slighter figure than his crowned wife, herself a full and majestic person, compared with whom Agilulph seems to have a merely subordinate prince-consort's part. We recognise the long linen garments, in fashion not ungraceful, somewhat like those of friars without the cowl, but the characteristic length of beard and hair, the forehead shaven up to the crown, whence the locks flowed along the cheeks, are not here to embody the historic report of Longobard costume. A range of precious offerings, diadems, jewelled crosses, chalices, and the golden hen and chickens presented by Theo-

dolinda, are also introduced in these reliefs to attest the royal piety towards St. John.

It was in the dusk of evening that the Iron Crown was shown to me; and at that hour the solemnity of the ceremonial gained in effect. Tapers are lit, incense is burnt, and two ecclesiastics attend at the altar in the transept above which that treasure is (or rather was) enshrined among the most revered relics. Before its place of deposit are removed three coverings; and at last is seen, behind a veil of gold tissue, a large glazed cross divided into compartments in which are kept relics of the Passion, consisting of portions of the True Cross, of the Sponge and Reed, of the Pillar of Scourging, and a Thorn from the wreath of agony; at the centre, between the transverse beams, being deposited that royal symbol made sacred by its association with another object of the same class, a Nail said to have been used at the Crucifixion, beaten into a narrow flat hoop and set within the golden circle. The Crown is formed of six gold lamina, capable of being enlarged by fillets so as to fit different heads; is richly jewelled, and partly encrusted with enamel in blue and white. As to the genuineness of the Relic whence it takes its name, the Roman Congregation of Rites has decided affirmatively; but the Church of Milan long rejected the tradition its claims rest on; and Muratori shows that the existence of such a sacred object, associated with the Italian Crown, was not known to antiquity (*Annali*, an. 603; and *Rer. Ital. Script.*, T. I, p. 4). When and by whom was the Relic obtained, or the Crown ordered and first worn, are questions not easily answered. Sigonius assumes that the latter was wrought for Agilulph; but Paulus Diaconus would scarcely have omitted, as he does, to refer it to his reign had such been its origin (4). Cantù

(4) « Milanese writers, following the annals of their native place, assert that the crown placed on his (Agilulph's) head, was a golden one with a circle of iron set into its interior. Hence has the name of the Iron Crown become famous in the Italo-Longobardic kingdom ». Sigonius.

concludes that it may have been for the first time used at the coronation of Berengarius, king of Italy, which took place at Pavia in 888. Charles V was the last sovereign of the *old* dynasties to wear this symbol, subsequently left untouched in its shrine at Monza till required for its original use by the great modern Conqueror, who placed it on his head with his own hand at Milan (1805), pronouncing his famous motto: *Dieu me l'a donnée; gare à qui la touche!*

Other objects shown in the sacristy of Monza are personal relics of the foundress and the Longobard Kings: as the two crowns with pendant gold crosses, alike profusely jewelled, that of Agilulph less precious for its 65 gems than for its miniature relief-figures (not absolutely inartistic) of the Saviour, Angels, and the twelve Apostles; also memorable for its epigraph, where may be found the magic of a name in the first recurrence extant of the illustrious title, illustriously revived, King of Italy: « *Agilulf. Grat. Di. Vir. Glor. Rex. Totius Ital. offeret Sco. Iohanni Baptiste In Ecla Modicia*. Theodolinda's *Chioccia*, or hen and seven chickens on a disk, all of silver gilt, is supposed to symbolize either the Archpreist and capitular Clergy of this church, or (as more propable) the seven provinces of the ancient kingdom collected around their motherly Queen: but this curious specimen is said to be merely a copy from the original, of solid gold, which found its way, how may be imagined, to the Papal Court at Avignon in the XIV century. Its bestowal shows how soon was adopted by the Longobards the idea of propitiating Heaven by costly gifts!

Different interest attaches to another object seen here: the list of relics sent by St Gregory to Theodelinda on occasion of the Baptism of her son, whose reign proved so disastrous—a document said to be in the Pontiff's autograph—precious indeed if genuine! the sacred objects referred to being such as the modest piety of that age was satisfied with: nothing more, in fact, than oil from lamps burning before Martyrs' tombs, some of these drops being from Roman cata-

combs. The Queen's Gospel Book, also kept here, is in binding of gold and silver gilt, adorned with rough gems and some curious intaglios in style characteristic of the age of transition after the Empire had fallen. Her Cross, of rock crystal overlaid with gold tissue at the back, is the one presented by St Gregory, together with his other gifts, on occasion of the baptism at this basilica. Her leathern fan and comb are indeed, in spite of barbaric gilding and jewellery, but rude specimens of the refinements a queen could command in the VII century (1). It was to this royal lady that St Gregory addressed his well-known « Dialogues »; and her instrumentality in bringing about the conversion of a nation indeed entitled her to gratitude from the Church. Yet it seems strange that, except the circumstances of her two marriages, both alike happy as well in the domestic as political sense, and the romantic manner in which she became the bestower of a crown with her hand, so little is known of a woman thus eminently influential and beloved.

An ecclesiastical decision of this period that must have rapidly and generally acted upon sacred Art, was the decree passed in a council at Constantinople, 680, that henceforth should be represented in churches not the mere symbolism but the historic reality of sacred subjects; that, con-

(1) A lady's comb seems oddly out of its place in the sacristy; but such implements for sacerdotal use were once among the things admitted in the furniture of many churches. In a proper sense of the decorum requisite for the ministers of the altar, the priest had the habit not only of washing his hands (as still observed) before the celebration, but also of combing his hair: and for such service ivory combs were kept in sacristies, at least at principal churches, as in those where the Popes used to repose on a couch, and make a kind of toilet, in the course of their attendance at great processions for long distances. In ecclesiastical inventories such objects are mentioned, and in classification with sacred things that seems strange to modern notions: « item calicem unum - pectinem eburneum unum ».



sequently, the Saviour of the World should no more be merely typified as a lamb, but depicted under human form. And noticeable also is a production in the religious literature of this century, from the pen of Theodore, a Greek monk raised to the archbishopric of Canterbury: the *Liber Penitentialis* (about 690), containing a graduated scale of penances for all imaginable sins, and soon adopted throughout the West as the approved norma of ascetic discipline; but the standard of observance founded on this new Code being too severe for human infirmity or indolence, there resulted from its general acceptance by the Clergy a system of commutation, or payment in money, usually made to the Church, in lieu of the chastisements incurred by sin, and which most prevailed during the two ensuing centuries. A year's penances, for instance, might thus be bought off at the rate of from 22 to 26 solidi, according to the offender's means. It would be superfluous to point out the deplorable consequences, inevitable through the weakness and corruptibility in man's nature, from the action of this materializing process on what is spiritual and moral in Christianity (4).

#### CHRONOLOGY OF MONUMENTS.

ROME. Pantheon dedicated as *S. Maria ad Martyres*, 608-10; SS. Vincentius and Anastasius at the *tre fontane*, *S. Adriano*, on the Forum, and SS. Quattro Coronati, 625-638; the last restored 847-55, and again, 1111, by Paschal II; SS. Vitus and

(4) Paulus Diaconus, « *Hist. Longobard.* », in Muratori, « *Rer. Ital. Script.* » Tom. I, pag. 4 (in which volume are engraved the bas-reliefs, the Iron Crown, and other noticeable treasures of Monza); Sigonius, « *De Regno Italiae* »; Troya, v. III; Kingsley, « *The Roman and the Teuton* » (giving a finished and vivid sketch of legislation and manners among the Longobards); Lami, « *Antichità Toscanæ* »; Richa, « *Chiese Fiorentine* ».

Modestus (at the arch of Gallienus), rebuilt 1177, S. Theodore, S. Martina on the Forum, restored 1255; again by Pietro da Cortona, and the church of St. Luke built over it, in the XVII century; paintings in chapel of S. Cecilia, Callixtan Catacombs.

FLORENCE. Cathedral, now Baptistery, of St. John, built under king Grimoald, 662-71; by some writers ascribed to period of Theodoric and Justinian; S. Reparata, the later cathedral, probably built towards the close of this, though ascribed by tradition to the V century; not totally destroyed till 1375, seventy-seven years after commencement of the new « Duomo ».

MILAN. Mosaics in lateral chapel of S. Lorenzo, the Saviour amidst the Apostles, under arcades, and the sacrifice of Abraham (of this or preceding century)—ancient church fell into ruin 1573.

GENOA. S. Tommaso, details mostly of Longobard period.

PAVIA. S. Pietro in Cielo d'oro, built by Agilulph about 604, ruinous, partly used as a store-house; details on façade (belonging to seminary) and two capitals only, antique; contained the tombs of St. Augustine and Boetius.

LUCCA. S. Frediano, 686-90, ascribed to the Longobard kings, but by Ricci to a private citizen; originally with four aisles; façade altered, and lateral chapels added, about 1112.

SPOLETO. Cathedral, ascribed to Longobard dukes, but rebuilt in XIII century, the tower alone remaining, though altered and with modern spire, of the antique; the church again almost rebuilt by Bernini, 1644; Aqueduct and bridge (height about 266 feet) built by the duke Theodelapius about 604; acute arches added in restoration by Cardinal Alborno, XIV century; substructures and nine piers probably all that remains of antique; S. Cipriano on the Clitumnus, almost in ruin since 1829 (see an interesting description in Ricci, c. VII, p. 203).

MONZA. Basreliefs on front of basilica, about the period 625-36.

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## XII.

### **The Eighth Century.**

WE now arrive at the most eventful epoch in the temporal, and through ulterior reaction in the ecclesiastical interests also of Rome—an epoch in which the saintly Pastors whose care was for heavenly things alone are succeeded by Royal Priests, occupied with the intrigues, and impelled often by the ambition of secular sovereignty; an epoch in which the Papacy passes into a new phase, becoming exposed to the same enmities, perils, and tempestuous shocks as other thrones whose occupants have had so often to prove how « uneasy lies the head that wears a crown ». The grey hairs of St. Peter's venerable successors have hitherto been duly revered, albeit with some exceptions of brutal and sacrilegious wrong; but the head encircled with the diadem of sacerdotal kingship will be seen dragged in the dust amidst the vicissitudes we have henceforth to consider; and lamentable, indeed, in its moral darkness, is the eclipse of that holy light once irradiating the great Patriarchal see of the West, through the results of the transition that caused it to deflect from its purer sphere, to descend into atmosphere clouded by earth-born mists of worldly care and ambition. The office deemed the vicariate of Christ henceforth becomes inevitably an object for the striving of those to whom secular power is sweeter than heavenly hopes, or the joy of consecrated duties; and the unspiritual character resulting—though indeed often in abeyance, redeemed by the vir-

tues of pure minded and illustrious Pastors—may well qualify our surprise at the spectacle of this sacred throne basely dishonoured, or proudly profaned, by such occupants as brought discredit to it in the X, the XI, and XV centuries. But there is another aspect not to be lost sight of, another lesson enforced by the contemplation of the historic drama, leading us to own, in the high position of the papacy through ages marked by barbarism and outrage against every right social or human, a mighty conservative power, a centre and rallying point for resistance to evil and advocacy of justice; and that a great providential fact is manifest even in the temporal principdom of St. Peter's successors, will hardly be contested by those to whom all their eventful history is familiar.

Turning to seek for traces of this epoch on monuments, we find them less numerous than are the records of previous centuries in Rome; though, indeed, in some instances, full of significance. Towards the close of this period a remarkable resuscitation of the arts in different walks, with an almost complete renewal of sacred architecture, was accomplished under such Popes as John VII, Adrian I, and Leo III. Scarcely a church in this City but was either restored or embellished by the last-named Pontiff, under whom the mosaic art, that of the illuminating of MS. codes, and to some degree also glass-painting (never indeed carried to perfection in any stage of art-history here) were liberally encouraged. The general renovation of architecture coincides with the Carlovingian period; the more characteristic features of the new style, such as the square brick-built *campanile*, with stories of narrow arcades and terra cotta cornices, or string-courses, being scarce found in any example earlier than the IX century. In splendour and costliness, church-adornment now seems at its apogee. Golden statuary, silver canopies, silk hangings embroidered with groups of sacred subjects had taken their place among usual decorations of Rome's basilicas. All the silver images bestowed by earlier Popes on



St. Peter's were replaced by others, the donation of Adrian I, in solid gold, representing the Saviour, the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles SS. Peter, Paul, and Andrew; whilst at the same time were introduced, to adorn the intercolumnations, sixty-five *vela*, or hangings of purple and gold tissue, and in the same church, a luminous cross (*pharos*), lit with 1370 flames, to pour radiance through nave and aisles, was hung from the silver-plated arch before the chancel on the three chief festivals, Christmas, Easter, and St. Peter's day. On each of the City's Titular churches, this generous Pope bestowed twenty Tyrian hangings of purple—in all 440, if at this period the number of such churches were (as reported by Anastasius) twenty two—though other accounts reckon twenty-eight. Hundreds of artists were employed at Rome under Adrian I in the workmanship of gold, silver, smalt, and precious stones, lapis lazuli being now in request among these; and the pictorial adorning of sacred buildings is mentioned in different instances; among others, the portico of the Lateran, rebuilt, painted, and flanked by a tower during Adrian's pontificate. With the old St. Peter's was demolished one interesting monument of the age's genius, in that chapel of « S. Maria ad Praesepe », raised by John VII, and one of the most magnificently enriched of all in the great basilica; its walls one field of mosaics, representing principal events in the life of Mary: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, and Presentation in the Temple (not indeed her « Transit », afterwards so prominent in Christian art—still less that « Assumption » which earlier art ignored altogether); besides events from the life of St. Peter: his preaching at Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome; his contest with Simon Magnus; the discomfiture and death of the latter (an early-admitted legend); also, from the Evangelic history, the Baptism, Last Supper, and Crucifixion; and, as accessorial, the figure of Pope John himself presenting a model of his chapel to the Virgin. Two only of these mosaic figures are still seen in the crypt of St. Peter's, detached

from the groups they once belonged to : the Pope holding the model in his hand, with a square nimbus round his head, which is venerable and expressive in character ; also S. Peter in attitude of exhorting, his features regular and aspect benign, not old in looks, though with white hair ; and below, in large letters — *Johannis Servi Sanctae Mariae*. Another detached fragment of the same composition is now in the sacristy of *S. Maria in Cosmedin*, its subject, the Virgin and Child receiving offerings from the Magi, the same Pontiff standing behind Mary's throne, and an Archangel with a sceptre in front ; not more than one arm of the figure offering gifts to the Child, being preserved. Though rude in execution and very deficient in drawing, these works shew feeling and earnestness ; and if enfeebled, their art is not that of a school yet *corrupted* ; the Christian ideas they illustrate are in harmony with ancient tradition and primitive feeling.

We must turn from Rome to Florence for the inspection of another, the most conspicuous remnant of these mosaics ordered by Pope John : a colossal figure of the Blessed Virgin, which found its way from the ancient St Peter's to the Tuscan capital in 1609, and is now seen over an altar at the Dominican church there, S. Marco. This is not an exalted treatment of its subject, but indeed a striking proof of decadence, both in feeling and art. It represents Mary standing on a platform in the attitude of prayer : a matured matron of heavy and clumsy figure, with countenance that show some remains of beauty long faded, and in the gorgeous costume of a Byzantine empress, all embroidery, jewellery, and gold ornaments ; her head not only crowned but loaded with cascades of gems, as also the breast and arms — the first example, I believe, of that degeneration in artistic conception, which, instead of the charm deriving from moral loveliness, was satisfied with the parade of female finery in its poor attempt to give lustre by what only vulgarises.

We find one of the most significant testimonies to the situation of the Papacy at this epoch in another mosaic-work,

now only preserved in the copy from a drawing of the lost original — in the modern tribune built to represent the ancient banquet-hall (*triclinium*) in the Lateran palace; the original of this very curious composition having been placed in the apsidal recess of that hall, built by Leo III, as is supposed, shortly after the coronation of Charlemagne at Saint Peter's — not therefore at date within the century we are considering, but so soon after its close that we may regard the work in question as belonging to the art-school, no less than illustrating the political circumstances, of the time.

That banquet-hall in the Lateran palace built by Leo III, is described as a scene in which was long centered all the magnificence of an ecclesiastical court assuredly more truly dignified, because in its ceremonial more full of symbolism and of deeper meanings, than any other. Painting, mosaic, porphyry columns, and marble incrustations adorned this scene of festivity, in the midst gushed a fountain, and around were twelve tribunes, or niches, one containing the marble throne of the Pope; the others, seats for Cardinals or other distinguished guests. Here at Christmas and Easter were held state banquets enlivened (if we may use such term) by sacred music, the singing of the pontific choristers to the organ; besides which a homily used to be read, and at Easter the Paschal lamb served and partaken of with certain mystic ceremonies. In the mosaics adorning this triclinium, Pope Leo, it is said, desired to commemorate both the coronation of Charlemagne, and his own restoration to the pontific throne, after having been obliged to fly from the fierce hostilities of a lawless faction, to take refuge at the court of the royal protector who did so much for his cause. Within an apsidal vault was represented the risen Saviour, amidst the Apostles, holding an open book with the words *Pax vobis*; St. Peter here carrying not only his keys, but also a long cross with four arms; round the archivolt above being read the words of the angelic hymn *Gloria in excelsis*, the very utterance with which the fugitive Pontiff greeted the Frankish king on his

arrival at the court in Paderborn (799). Laterally to the apse were groups fraught with historic significance; on one side, the Saviour enthroned between two kneeling figures, St. Peter, and an Emperor designated by name as *R. Constantinus*, and distinguished by the *square* nimbus round his head—therefore assuredly meant for a living sovereign, no other than Constantine V, contemporary of Leo III; the St. Peter here receiving *three* keys, Constantine receiving a banner, the sign of dominion, from the Saviour. On the other side, St. Peter enthroned between a kneeling Emperor and Pope; giving to the former (Leo III) a pallium, to the latter (Charlemagne) a similar banner, each of these two figures with name inscribed after the prefix *D. N.* (*dominus noster*), and below this group being also read the words: *Beate Petre dona bitam Leoni P. P. et bictoriam Carulo Regi dona*. The triple keys are interpreted by Alemanni (*De Lateranensis Pariet.* as implying the power to bind and loose with the superadded authority over secular as well as spiritual interests; also, with ulterior significance, that prerogative so memorably exercised by Pope Leo in the bestowal of the Western Empire on Charlemagne; and the pallium is regarded as here the special symbol of supremacy in St. Peter, for which sense Alemanni supplies proof in the curious monastic usage, found in certain ancient rules for the cloister, of silently indicating that Apostle's name by passing the right hand from the shoulder to the breast so as to describe the form of such garment. In the copy of the mosaic before us is read the fragmentary inscription, near that Apostle's figure: *scimus* (*santissimus*) *D. N. Leo P. P., D. N. Carulo Regi*. In the original the entire group of the Saviour and two kneeling figures had been destroyed by fire, or gradual decay, long before the rest perished, as it unfortunately did in 1737, on the attempt being made to remove this whole mosaic-work, whilst the then extant remnant of the ancient banquet-hall was being taken down. A coloured drawing, preserved in the Vatican library, was at hand to allow of the reproduction now be-



fore us, raised to its place in a building designed to represent the original triclinium, with its mosaics thus supplied, by order of Benedict XIV (1743).

In the detail of the banner bestowed upon the Greek *as well* as upon the Frankish Emperor, Hallam sees proof that the Byzantine rule was not effectually abrogated at Rome till long after the famous donations of Pepin and Charlemagne; and indeed the significance of this symbol, as conferred on whatever potentate by the Papacy from Rome, seems to point at nothing else than an acknowledged right of superintendence in temporal affairs even at this centre of sacerdotal government—how else can we understand the coincidental acts, the distinction between the symbolic gifts—the keys and pallium for the spiritual, the martial banner for the regal office? Both Adrian I and Leo III had actually sent a banner to Charlemagne; the latter with the request that he, then king, would depute an envoy to receive the oaths of allegiance to himself from the Roman people. Nor was this offering of the *vexillum* confined to the complimentary intercourse of the Popes with sovereigns. A patriarch of Jerusalem sent a banner, with the keys of the holy sepulchre, to the same king, afterwards Emperor; and a similar symbol of armed defence, invoked from the powerful, used to be given by monasteries to the patrons relied on for protection. In this mosaic of the Lateran Triclinium we can scarce reject the proof that, at the close of the VIII century, no unlimited political rule over their metropolis had yet become either the theory or claim of the Pontiffs. In another mosaic, ordered by Leo III, was for the first time introduced royalty by the side of sanctity—the image of a king associated with Apostles. — curious evidence to that new position now formed for the Papacy among secular potentates — Charlemagne with diadem, jewelled mantle, and sword, together with the Pope in sacred vestments, and the chief Apostles, now appearing in the church of S. Susanna, where, through the Vandalism of modern restorers, this historic art-work was destroyed in the year 1600.

At *SS. Nereo ed Achilleo* on the Appian Way is a mosaic referred to the same pontificate, but now, unfortunately, in great part covered by modern painting; the subjects of its groups on small scale, ranged over the arch of the tribune, being, in the centre, the Transfiguration; laterally, the Annunciation, and the Madonna and Child attended by Angels. In the first-named composition Christ appears within a radiated elliptical nimbus; the three Apostles kneeling awe-struck below; Moses and Elias being here utterly unlike all types assigned to such personages in later Art; the Angels, majestic figures in white robes; the Blessed Virgin, twice represented, and in each example seated on a throne, being of matronly and severe aspect: the general treatment, and particularly the costumes, of classic character; and it is noticeable that the principal subject, the Transfiguration, here appears for the first time in Roman art.

To the above-named interesting little church we may turn for a specimen of this century's architecture, though the *SS. Nereo ed Achilleo*, which was not only rebuilt but transferred to a different locality from that of the more ancient edifice, by Leo III, has no doubt lost far more than it retains of its original features, owing first to the repairs of date 4475 (after the decay into which it had fallen during the Avignon exile), and secondly to the restoration, ordered by the Cardinal who took his title from this church, the celebrated Baronius — who, however, desired that in these works the primitive basilica-type should be strictly followed. The beautifully inlaid marble screens of the chancel, and the spiral columns with mosaic ornamentation that rise above their cornice, together with the rich pavement of the elevated choir, the marble encrustation and the graceful canopy of the high altar, are all, we may believe, antique, (the latter, however, but partly so), referrible to the time of Leo III; but the reading desks, of quite plain description, for the Gospel and Epistle, are modern, inappropriately substituted for the ambones of ancient use. We have here one of the earliest exam-

ples of that beautiful inlaid work in coloured stone, on the chancel-screens that became a distinguishing feature in the Romanesque basilica, adding a bloom of loveliness to its otherwise severe and simple aspects, like the flower clustering on the rock. The high altar here has still its *transennae*, or marble grating, through which the sacred tomb may be descried; and through which it was the ancient practice to pass handkerchiefs, or other objects, for touching the shrine. I know of no more beautiful specimen of early Christian decoration than the front of that same altar, designed in architectonic style, with inlaid porphyry and mosaic, and compartments divided by tiny colonnettes on whose capitals are eagles and griffins. A noticeable example of the ancient episcopal throne is that in the hemicycle beyond, with supporting lions, and a Gothic head-piece, the latter a mediaeval addition; and we may here read the whole of a sermon by St. Gregory, pronounced from this seat, on the back of which it is chiselled. Otherwise this solitary church presents but too evident marks of a modern period: though still, indeed, distinguished by venerable antiquity and a devotional character far more impressive than that sumptuous modern architecture, least religious, least expressive of any high Catholic feeling, so much more prevalent in Rome. Turn, for instance, from the overcharged pomps of the *Gesù* to this almost deserted sanctuary on the Appian Way!

The mosaics at *S. Teodoro* are, probably, though not certainly, of the art-decorations bestowed on so many of Rome's churches by Adrian I. Imperfectly seen in a low dim-lit apse, they represent, and in style almost classic, with much dignity of forms, the Saviour seated on a globe, giving benediction, between SS. Peter and Paul, who present to Him Theodore and another Saint, each with his offering of a leafy crown; a hand, extended from bright clouds above, indicating the Eternal One, who holds a diadem over the head of the Divine Son.

The beautiful and perfect examples of the sacred interior at *S. Clemente*, where the elevated choir, ambones, marble

chancel screens and richly inlaid Paschal candelabrum, form a complete monument of this period, claim special attention from all students of church-architecture. It seems beyond doubt that these interesting details were raised from the lower, the now subterranean, basilica, to serve for their proper purpose in the building erected above, and probably within the first years of the XII century, on account of the injury done to that older church by the Norman conflagration. That venerable choir and its ambones are still used, on high occasions, as S. Clemente is officiated in by the Irish Dominicans; but one may regret the general abandonment in Rome of this ritual observance, that both enhances the dignity and gives distinctness to the intent of Catholic worship.

There is one other noticeable, though now obscured, remnant of this age's architecture, in the tribune of a church ascribed (though but by doubtful authority — see Gregorovius) to Charlemagne, and to the date 797: *S. Salvatore in Torrione*, or *in Marcello*, raised against the walls of the Leonine city near the modern *Porta Cavalleggieri*; in the later mediæval period left ruinous, and in part destroyed for the object of enlarging the prisons of the Inquisition. Built up in the back premises of that gloomy palace the extant portion may still be seen, and is remarkable for some good details of terra cotta moulding. Severano (see his *Sette Chiese*) supposes that the Frankish nation had here their *schola*, or special centre for worship and assemblage.

On the whole, we have but little, in the monumental sphere, to tell of the genius manifest in Rome during a century so fraught with events of enduring result. Splendour and profuse decoration seem to have been at this period greatly developed in the sanctuary: but that technical skill or judgment kept pace with such external progress is not inferable from evidences before us. From the superstition so decidedly betrayed in Rome's later art-works, this age seems exempt, at least so far as material testimonies can be relied on.

A new class of art-subjects, now introduced into churches, was the General Councils and Synods, first mentioned as



represented in painting in connection with the condemnation of the theologic opinions put forth by the Emperor Philip Bardanes, who mounted the throne of Constantinople in 714, and, according to the usual Byzantine practice, sent his profession of faith to the Pope, Constantine, then occupying the see, which the latter, with the whole body of Roman Clergy ejected as erroneous. It is a noticeable proof how much theological interests were now ascendant over all others among a comparatively matter-of-fact and practical-minded people, in this respect different from the subtly argumentative and ever-wrangling Greeks, that the Romans now got up a subscription in order to have all the six General Councils yet on historic record represented on the walls of St. Peter's — *pancarea* being the Greek name by which such pictures were henceforth known.

In the first years of this century was effected a restoration that deserves its place among events of local story: the Palatine, no more a royal residence since the visit of Theoderic, but where, till at least the end of the VI<sup>th</sup> century, had abode a magistrate whose office was known by the name, *Cura Palatii Urbis Romæ*, occurring in two epigraphs given in the collection of De Rossi. The covering of the Pantheon's cupola with leaden tiles, to replace the more precious incrustation of which it had been lately despoiled, also deserves notice among the public works of Gregory III. In the official sphere now becomes prominent, though not now for the first time known, the dignitary with title « Duke of Rome », appointed by the Greek Emperor, but originally one among several compeers who acquired both military and civil power in Italian cities during the VI<sup>th</sup> century, for the most part within the period 527-35 — Joannes at this City, Cyprian at Perugia, Bessa at Spoleto and Piacenza (1). At Rome this dukedom seems to have played but a subordinate

(1) Troya, « Medio Evo d'Italia », vol. III, lib. LII. Gregorovius supposes that the Roman Dukes existed only from 744 to 740.

part in the presence of other Greek officials ; and one of the first surgings of that irrepressible movement which finally overthrew the government of the Eastern Caesars at Rome , was the resistance of a large party among the citizens to the Duke Peter , deputed for local administration , on account of his representing a sovereign, Bardanes , whose theology was heretical ! The « Roman Duchy » is a term early introduced and long retained in historic usage ; but the Dukes of this government , invested with authorities directly deriving from the Imperial , independent of Papal sources , for ever disappear after the year 740. In a new character we now see revived the rank of Senator ; its title at least being assumed , with a resuscitation of the formula S. P. Q. R. , in the superscription to the letter addressed by Rome's principal citizens to King Pepin , date 757 , after the election of Paul I ; but « Senator » became a title reduced simply to the sense of Magnate , assumed together with such others as *Dux*, *Comes*, *Judex* , *Consul* , etc. ; the last-named being granted by Emperors , during this period of decline , to many persons who had proved deserving and by many others purchased for money , not only at Rome but in other cities , Ravenna , Venice , Naples. The Consulate , from the middle of the VIII century , began to be conferred by Popes likewise , as , in the first instance , by Stephen II , who created one Duke Stephen « Consul » , with powers for governing this City during his own absence on a journey. At last this title became hereditary among the Roman patricians , and in the IX century even vulgar , attached to almost every office of the least significance ; by the X century brought down even to the mercantile level ( *Consul et Negotiator* , see Galetti , *Primicerio* ).

In the century we are now considering the Lateran Palace became the centre to which were ultimately referred all ecclesiastical interests of Christendom ; and the stately ceremonial , the complicated *personnel* , now surrounding the Pontiff , seem borrowed , with some modifications , from the pre-eminently pompous Byzantine Court. The chief

officials attached to the Pontificate, and now organized as a regular Ministry, were generally styled *Judices de Clero*; but severally known as — *Primicerius Notariorum*, the prime Minister or Secretary of State, who stood at the head of affairs during the *sede vacante*, representative of the Power whose throne was empty; the *Secundicerius*, or under Secretary of State; the *Arcarius*, Minister of Finances; the *Sacellarius*, Almoner, or Paymaster to the troops, and dispenser of bounties; the *Primus Defensor*, or administrator of the Pontific patrimonies, advocate in whatever concerned the Papal prerogatives, and also superintendent of agricultural interests; lastly, the *Nomenclator*, Minister of Grace and Justice, and Advocate on behalf of orphans, widows, the oppressed and captives, to whom applied all those desirous of seeking relief from that throne of moral arbitration which St. Peter's chair so long continued to be. The Primicerius and Secundicerius used to lead the Pope by the hand as he walked between them in processions, both, though only subdeacons in the Church, taking precedence of bishops, as do Cardinal Deacons at the present day. Next to these highest officials was the *Vestiarius*, who not only superintended the Papal wardrobe and treasury, but, within his administrative sphere, exercised judicial authority, and whose rank was sometimes held by patricians, even those bearing the title of Consul or Duke. This latter was a laic post; but the five ministers above-named were Subdeacons, unable to rise to higher ecclesiastical preferment, whilst more important in the affairs of Rome than Bishops or Cardinals; and in the Papal election, above all, the influential body (1). Another high-placed functionary was the «*Chastularus*», who in some causes acted as judge with commission from the Pope; but the Praefect of the City still held the rank of Chief Justice in criminal causes,

(1) This system, as we have seen above, was originated by St. Gregory: it is thoroughly entered into and explained by Gregorovius.

to whose tribunal the Pontiffs themselves used to defer for definitive sentences.

The short pontificates of John VI, John VII, and Sisinnius (701-'8), with which this century opens, after that of Sergius, are marked by only one important public event—the armed rising, namely, of the Roman people, of the troops from the neighbouring garrisons, and even from Ravenna, in the resolution to protect the first-named of those Popes from the supposed hostile designs of a new Exarch, Theophilactes, who arrived at Rome in 702; but, not being charged with the accomplishment of any project against the Papacy, was well received by John VI, who, better informed of his intentions, exerted himself as peace-maker to check the inconsiderate zeal for his own interest; and had thus the merit of putting down a movement that might have ripened into rebellion against the Byzantine Empire. Constantine, a Syrian by birth (708-15), was the last of the Roman Pontiffs to visit Constantinople, whither he repaired by desire of Justinian II. (740), in the object, conformably with that Emperor's wishes, of bringing to issue certain questions respecting the sense of decrees passed by the Council « in Trullo » — It is impossible, on reading of the reception given to this Pope at the Eastern Capital, to exclude the conviction that even the Court and Government most obstinately addicted to theologic wrangling, and most prone to impose its dogmatic dicta on the whole world, had by this time admitted an inmost sense of deference to the Papacy as the acknowledged headship of the Christian Church. The Patriarch at the head of his Clergy, the Emperor's son with the whole Senate, met this venerable guest beyond the City-gates, and conducted him to the palace of Gallia Placidia, the Pope himself being mounted on horseback and mitred; and there was now seen the spectacle of an eastern Emperor, who still ruled over Rome, kneeling with crowned head before a subject Bishop, and devoutly kissing his feet! It is an horrific sequel, and illustrative of the remorseless political passions of the age, that we have



to contemplate in what ensued but one year later : the head of the same Emperor , put to death by his opponent and successor Philip Bardanes , carried about the towns of Italy , and sent even to Rome as a fit trophy of successful usurpation to be displayed in that capital of the Church !

Under the third successor to Bardanes , Leo the Isaurian , began that struggle so apparently trivial in its immediate object , but so mighty in its results , Between the Iconoclasts and the image-worshippers.. Not unnatural was it that a plain uneducated man of humble origin , like this Emperor , should be quite unable to appreciate the subtle arguments in defense of a now universal practice that bore obvious resemblance to Pagan idolatry ; and we may easily give him credit for a sincere , even pure , intention of religious reform when he began by striking at once at the root of the evil through the destruction of all religious images , and the prohibition of all future honours towards them. It does not pertain to the subject of these pages to enter on the episode of Byzantine history whose events are, on one hand, persecution and massacre, by which Leo aimed at accomplishing his object ; on the other, the sanguinary rebellion by which his subjects endeavoured to frustrate it even at the cost of a change of dynasty. Twenty-four years of reign allowed this Prince to secure temporary success to his unpopular innovations, but not without deep and permanent injury to the Empire of the East. The resistance [against the Iconoclast movement in Italy proved overwhelming ; the Exarchate Government was in imminent danger ; the Pentapolis in full revolt ; all the cities of the central provinces expelled the imperial officials in order to elect Dukes for local administration in their place ; the enthusiasm of religious irritation rose so high as to suggest the project, for a time prevalent , of electing another Emperor , and leading him in triumph to Constantinople ! Most important as affecting the future was the direction taken by this movement in Rome, where Basilus, the last Duke ever invested with power by the Emperor,

was compelled to yield to the popular impetus, and quitted in 726, leaving that City free from all governative control of the Greek Autocrat. Then did the Papacy, now represented by a vigorous, learned, and experienced man, Gregory II, (whom the Church honours as a Saint) 715-31, pass into a preparatory phase of civil principedom, acquiring, in the absence of all imperial officials, « a ministerial superintendence erroneously confounded by the ultramontane party with absolute sovereignty » (*Art de vérifier les dates*). And the purely democratic origin of this power, voluntarily conceded by the unanimous choice of a people so familiar with the nature of the authority they were now bent upon exalting above every other, is among its first claims to respect. There is, indeed, no proof of the intention on Pope Gregory's part either to assume the character of King, or to disown the *theoretic* rights of the Emperor over Rome. He had even endeavoured to stay the storm by writing two letters to Leo in justification of the Catholic doctrine as to sacred images; but the Iconoclast only answered with threats and arguments aimed at intimidating. Through a troubled pontificate of fifteen years the opposition to the stubborn will of the Emperor was incessantly maintained by this inflexible Pope. His successor, Gregory III, a Syrian (631-41), gave proof almost in the very act of ascending St. Peter's throne that the Greek Emperor was still recognised by him as sovereign at Rome: applying to the Exarch, according to precedent, for the ratification of his election; but such formal submission was made, in this instance, for the last time; and during a hundred years subsequently, till the prerogatives of the Western Empire had attained their zenith, no alien authority interfered with the freedom of the Papal Electors. Gregory III. wrote on the subject of images in a tone more severe and haughty towards the Emperor; and when answered by threats that Leo would send his emissaries to Rome to break the statue of St. Peter, to deal with Gregory as Constans had dealt with Martin, and carry him away in chains, the Pope rejoined in

the following extraordinary terms : — « The Roman Pontiffs are mediators and arbiters of peace between the East and West ; and we are undaunted by your threats. The eyes of the nations are fixed on our humility : they reverence *as a God on earth* (Θεὸν ἐπιγείων ἐχούσι) the Apostle St. Peter, whose image you threaten to break ; the remotest kingdoms of the West tender homage to CHRIST and his Vicar. You alone are deaf to his voice. If you persist , on your head be the blood that may flow ! » How profound the darkness that had fallen over Christendom, when , in the zeal for a cause of merely external and hierarchic interest , the highest Pastor in the Church , for whom was affected the character of infallible exponent of Truth , could thus ignore an essential principle , and introduce an utterly alien element into the sphere of Divine Religion by this formal sanction of creature-worship ! That blasphemous assertion seems indeed to afford the most crushing argument against the entire fabric of those ultra theories in regard to the Papacy still maintained in their extreme sense by devoted, and , no doubt , sincere adherents.

The envoy sent to Constantinople , bearer of this letter , returned without having had courage to deliver it , for which disobedience he was forgiven on the sole condition of undertaking the same mission again ; but , on his second journey, was arrested and thrown into prison — treatment similar to which awaited the ecclesiastic whom the Pope had charged with another letter , informing Leo of the decisions passed by a Council against the Iconoclasts. They were to be cut off from Christian communion , and treated as heretics , so long as persisting in their stubbornness ; and in respect to the assemblage of 93 bishops presided by the Pope , in which this decree was passed , it is remarkable that not only all the Roman Clergy , but the Nobility , the Consul , and the People ( we may suppose in a certain representation of their several classes ) assisted , and *all* subscribed the act in question (Fleury, liv. XLII ) — memorable example of what even a local

Council ought to be according to the then ascendant conviction of Christianity !

In his increasing exasperation the Emperor at last resolved on invasion , and sent a powerful fleet against Italy for the subjection of the revolted people with their uncompromising Clergy ; but all those Greek vessels perished by tempest in the Adriatic , and the only permanent injury the fierce Iconoclast was able to inflict on his opponents was through the raising of taxes in Sicily and Calabria , besides the confiscation of all the Papal patrimonies in those provinces, which at this time yielded to the Holy See a revenue of three and a half gold talents per annum (1).

That the movement against image-worship was not the mere result of the arbitrary whim of an autocrat , but a great protest of mind against gathering abuses , is no more to be questioned than is the contemporaneous fact of fanatical excess by which it was discredited and ultimately rendered fruitless. Almost thirty years after its commencement , a Byzantine Synod of 338 bishops pronounced and subscribed unanimous decrees to the effect that all visible symbols of Christ , except that mysteriously manifest in the Eucharist , were either blasphemous or heretical ; that image-worship was a corruption of Christianity and a revival of Paganism ; that all such monuments of idolatry ought to be broken or erased ( Gibbon , chap. XLIX ). A memorable Synod at Frankfort , held under Charlemagne , in which 300 bishops pronounced severe censures against idolatrous practices , but blamed the fierce excesses of the Iconoclast Greeks, seems, on the whole , the most noble and rational effort proceeding from the Latin Clergy in the course of this long contest. In

(1) Taking the gold talent at the antique Attic standard, we have its equivalent in francs 55, 608, 99. It was in vain that several Popes appealed to the Greek Emperors for restitution of this large property in after years.



the Papal decisions, which finally and completely triumphed, appears the sagacious spirit of that Power, which so well appreciated the age, and knew how to render itself the organ of the public feeling it had continued, up to this period at least, ably and wisely to enlist on its own side. That the voice of warning was not heeded, nor the severe accusations now current against Catholic practice allowed any weight, that the Papacy made no endeavour to check observances the ignorant abuse of which had raised so fearful a tempest, whilst it firmly resisted the demands of a fanatic Puritanism, resolved to retain that agency of symbolized appeals so potent over the imagination, and now so intimately blended with the whole ritual system — this omission, in the procedure of the great Latin Patriarchate at such a crisis, one may still more wonder at than deplore. But the policy adopted by Rome was fruitful of grand and heart-stirring results: all the links of that ideal chain by which Art has riveted the union between a visible and invisible life; all the complex presentment of Christianity to the soul through the sense, the divinely eloquent appeals of Genius in the Sanctuary, all might have failed to fulfil their assigned office in man's education had the attempts of the Isaurian Leo proved successful. The ultimate decision still acted upon by Latin Catholicism, and the importance still attached to art-objects in her worship, are well conveyed in the words of the synod above mentioned: — « Whoever shall condemn the practice of the Church in regard to the veneration of sacred images, whoever shall take away, profane, or destroy such, or speak of them with contempt, shall be deprived of the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST, and separated from the communion of the Church.

The main argument for the defense in the course of this controversy, was, that the Church only sanctioned what none could reasonably condemn in allowing the representation of the human form, and of what had been seen by human eye. « Why do we not paint the Father of Christ? » (says Gregory III to Leo). « Because it is impossible to represent the Divine Nature. If we had seen Him we might delineate

His form also ». And St. John Damascene, the most eloquent advocate, writes : « How could we make any image of that which has neither form nor limits? When we describe the Trinity we employ the comparison of the sun, of his light and rays; of the river and its source ». All this, and other like reasoning on the subject, conveys implied condemnation of what subsequently came into practice, and what the Italian Church especially offends in at this day — those startling representations of the Supreme Being, prevalent in art from the XV, but still more from the XVI century, and now most offensively conspicuous at Rome. As gross minds are impressed by these, it is too natural that the whole religious idea, with such, should be lowered or darkened; and it is probable that the miserably low tone of thought and language but too common in this country, even in the pulpit, which refers to Deity the regards of the courtier, of the self-interested servant towards the earthly monarch, has had one impulse from this profane anthropomorphism in modern Art. A reaction of the Mohammedan religion upon the Church — whose abuses that new antagonism may be said to have risen up against for chastisement and warning — seems manifest in the incipient stage of Iconoclasm; and there may be truth in the report that the Emperor Leo imagined a token of Divine wrath against idolatry in a natural phenomenon, the sudden rising of a volcanic island, preceded by clouds of dense smoke, from the Archipelago, as occurred in 726. In the success of the cause he opposed, we may note, at all events, one signal step towards that which later ages saw more fully realized, and which is farther advancing through the tendencies of our own time, the severance of Christianity from all save the purely moral in Judaism (1).

(1) One noticeable result of the present movement in Italy is the general suppression of such public image-worship as the carrying about of pictures and dressed-up effigies in streets — at least in principal cities; and at Naples authorities have gone so far as to remove all such from their shrines in public places.

The second general Council of Nice, A. D. 787, ordered that images and crucifixes, whether painted or in relief, should be placed in churches, on sacred vessels and vestments, in private houses and streets; and the Council of Trent passed the final decree, wisely directed to check abuses, that « it is not permitted to place, or cause to be placed, any image whatever, in any situation or any church, even though privileged, unless such image shall have been first approved by the Bishop ».

Images are still blessed with rites and forms of prayer, given in the Roman *Pontifical*, beautiful in purport and open to no charge of superstitious tendency. One immediate result of the Iconoclast movement was to give impulse to an emigration of artists, probably in the greater number belonging to monastic orders, from Greece into Italy. So early as under the pontificate of Gregory II, asylums were opened at Rome for such exiles; and the mosaicists alone, fugitive from Eastern provinces, eventually became so numerous in this City that convents were founded expressly for their accommodation by different Popes. Still, in the IX century, was this emigration in progress under Paschal I, who particularly extended his protection to Greek artists; and hence sprung up influences on Italian soil that, no doubt, had their effect for centuries on the characteristics of art; for to this foreign school we may refer the various pictures of the Madonna, now blackened by age, while grotesque and repulsively stern in aspect, which are revered in Roman churches — and among whose number no fewer than seven are ascribed by popular tradition, still unscrupulously sanctioned, to the Evangelist St. Luke! The celebrated *Volto Santo* is probably one among earliest specimens of this ascetic Greek school in Rome.

Greater events than this theologic triumph were now maturing, and for the interests of the Papacy. The Longobardic government, whose seat was at Pavia, hitherto pacific spectator of the disturbances now beginning to sap the foundations

of the Greek Empire in Italy, was at last naturally led to seek its own advantages out of such a state of dissolution; and Liutprand, an enterprising and pious king, headed a campaign against the Exarchate territories, the first facile success in which was the taking of Ravenna, about 727, entered by the Longobards after a single assault, the treasonable intelligence with a citizen having aided the besiegers. The rapidity of Liutprand's ensuing conquests in the western and central provinces showed how feeble had become the Byzantine rule in those parts: and the cities of AEmilia, besides those of the Pentapolis, Narni (then under the Duke of Spoleto), and Sutri, in the duchy of Rome, fell into this invader's power, apparently without a struggle. The last-named place was, however, subjected to pillage, and all the wealth of its inhabitants carried away, before, after an occupation of a few weeks or months, the conqueror was led, through the effect of persuasions and presents there reaching him from Gregory II, to an act of momentous consequences — a step which for the first time raised the Roman Pontificate to the rank of secular sovereignty (1). By formal act of donation did Liutprand confer this town on the Pope in the name of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, — thus being implied the idea that what was given to the Pontiff was an offering

(1) Troya (lib. LI, 46) shows that a certain nucleus of secular dominion had been obtained much earlier through the donation, by Justinian, of the village and farm (*massa*) of Gallipoli on the coast near Tarentum; bestowed not merely as a feudal possession, but as a territory consecrated to God in the strict sense of the Old Testament precepts. Here was exercised by St. Gregory an authority not alone over colonists and slaves, but over traders and artisans; though the common Law of the Empire was no less maintained than in all the other estates, called patrimonies, held by the Popes with less absolute tenure. Gallipoli, at this time, seems to have been a mere village; and historians have not considered that, by virtue of such acquisition, any real sovereignty was secured to the Pontificate.



for religious interests — *beatissimis Apostolis Petro et Paulo restituit atque donavit*, says Anastasius of this donation. At this period the Longobards, no longer Arians but orthodox believers, were devoted friends of the papacy; and amidst the imminent dangers, even to life, that now threatened Gregory II from the perfidious plots of Leo the Isaurian, this nation entered into a species of league with the Romans for the Pontiff's defense, protesting they should deem it glorious to shed their blood for such a holy cause; Gregory II being meantime occupied in alms-giving, fasting, prayer, and religious processions, in a manner that at once conformed with the high ideal of his mission on earth, and stimulated the enthusiasm of those eager to add new honours to his throne. An Italian power now beginning to rank high, and to arm fleets for conquest, was Venice, whose Doge, Orso, intervened in the interest of the declining Greek Empire against the Longobards; and there is an extant letter from Gregory II to that potentate, urging him to lay siege to Ravenna in order to restore that city to its former rulers — though the authenticity of this document is indeed questioned by Muratori (*Annali ann.* 729). Neither Anastasius nor Paulus Diaconus, the writers best entitled to credit, mention such interposition of the Pontiff on behalf of the Greek Empire; and even the year of that siege that resulted in the expulsion of the Longobards and re-establishment of the Exarchate at Ravenna, is left in uncertainty. What is beyond doubt is the fact of this restoration not long after the iconoclast movement had commenced, and the subsequent recovery by the Greeks of the Pentapolis also, i. e. the cities of Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Ancona, and Umana. A league ensued between the Exarch and Liutprand; and the union of their forces was agreed upon in the double object of subjecting the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento to the latter (their rightful but scarce recognized king), and of compelling the Romans to submit to the Byzantine sceptre. After Trasimond, duke of Spoleto, had yielded without resistance, the Greeks and Longobards marched

to the siege of Rome, before whose walls they encamped in the field of Nero. Gregory II, wisely trusting to spiritual arms alone, took a step at once the most politic and most becoming to his sacred character: presented himself at the royal tent, and by his eloquence so subdued the devout and susceptible king as to persuade him to give up his hostile purpose, and retire without shedding a drop of blood. In return, the monarch only desired that the Pontiff should receive into favour and release from excommunication the Exarch Eutichius, who was forgiven, notwithstanding the knowledge of his complicity in the plot directed against Gregory's life by Leo. The Longobard king was then led by the Pope into St. Peter's, where he made offering at the Apostle's shrine of arms and ornaments; his sword and dagger, his regal mantle, armlet, girdle, and golden crown, together with a silver cross, while the clergy sang halleluias and Te Deum to celebrate a peaceful triumph like that of St. Leo over Attila. The pure and saintly renown of Gregory II is enhanced by the few other details, that it may be sufficient here to notice, of his long pontificate: his liberality towards various churches; his learning in the midst of a darkened age; his zeal in founding monasteries, and restoring those fallen into decay. Lofty energies, piety, and blameless conduct were indeed rewarded by brilliant success in the pontificate of the second Gregory.

The first noticeable proceeding of Gregory III (731-'41) was to convoke that Council at which the Roman Clergy and Nobility, also (see Muratori, anno 732, for this democratic element in the assemblage) the *people* of that City intervened, and the excommunication, subscribed by all, was fulminated against the Iconoclasts. All the cities of Italy, in the sequel, added their prayers to the denunciations of the Church, and petitioned the Emperor, but in vain, to desist from his onset against sacred images. Presently appeared another foe, more formidable than the distant Emperor, in that same Longobard King who had hitherto proved the friend of the Papacy, but was now exasperated at the protection given

in Rome to Trasimond, Duke of Spoleto, who had provoked the hostility of his suzerain, but was befriended by the Pope and the Roman Patricians, supported by an army, now, it seems, under the immediate command of the pontiff. Four cities of the Roman Duchy were taken and garrisoned by the Longobards; but after the withdrawal of those invaders, Trasimond, in league with the Duke of Benevento as well as with Rome, entered the Spoleto territories at the head of an army recruited in the same province, and without any severe contest succeeded in recovering the city and entire Duchy he had been expelled from. It was either in 739 or 741 that a memorable mission set out from Rome for France. Gregory III, alarmed at the Longobardic invasion and the dangers to which the Roman State was now exposed, sent two envoys to Charles Martel, now in absolute power as Prince of the Franks, to entreat his armed intervention, and offer him in recompense a certain authority over Rome, with title either of Consul or Patrician; the Pope promising, on his own behalf and in the name of the citizens, to withdraw entirely from the obedience of the Emperor in return for such good offices. Thus early did a Pontiff not only act as himself master over Rome, but as entitled to dispose of her to a foreign power, though not indeed without consent of her people! Thus early did the Papacy adopt that policy of calling in the stranger, and throwing itself upon that foreign protection against the dangers threatening at home, which eventually brought such disastrous results to Italy, and forced upon the national mind the conviction of an antagonism between the ecclesiastical government and the cause of Italian independence. Such a precedent as that of Gregory III at this crisis, is now, says Balbo, « universally condemned by History and in Italian opinion; nor without reason, if we consider the prolonged evil of its effects; nevertheless, it would be difficult to say whether it were not lawful, even the duty of one placed at the head of a nation, to defend his own and that nation's independence, to protect moreover a recent and yet uncertain ac-

quisition by summoning against oppressive strangers other strangers apparently less dangerous » — considerations that certainly may be urged in this Pontiff's case. Charles Martel received with great honour the envoys of Gregory III ; but did not accept the offered dignity, confining his response to a promise of interposition for the benefit of Rome with the Longobardic king.

Zacharias, a Greek, (741-'52), was consecrated Pope after a vacancy of not more than three days—proof that the ratification by the Exarch was no long required or waited for after the Papal election. This energetic Pontiff interposed in person, and in character of peace-maker, between the latter and Liutprand, after that Greek viceroy had entreated his good offices for the rescue of his states from another threatened invasion by the Longobards. The reception of Zacharias at Ravenna was such as might have welcomed an Angel from Heaven ; the Exarch met him at a church forty miles distant ; and outside the gates the population, of both sexes, came forth towards him with blessings and acclamations. At Pavia the Pope's visit was far from agreeable to Liutprand, who nevertheless attended his Mass on the feast of St. Peter, and entertained him in the royal palace ; furthermore, though this King was obstinate in his hostility against the Exarch, he at last yielded to the eloquence of the Pontiff, and consented to restore a part of the Greek territories he had seized, in the Ravenna and Cesena provinces. The truly evangelic office of peace-maker and umpire between contending princes was thus early sustained, and with successful issue, by the Pontificate ! Momentous for its temporal interests was another meeting between Zacharias and Liutprand, at Terni, in 742, on occasion of that King's march through the Roman Duchy after a military expedition to Benevento, when the Pope determined to appeal to him in person for obtaining restitution of the four cities, within that latter province, already occupied by him during two years. Before arriving at Narni, Zacharias was received by the Dukes and first officers of the Longo-



bards, with a detachment of troops, under whose escort he was conducted to Terni (a city then within the Spoleto Duchy), and received by Liutprand, amidst his officers, at the gates of a basilica beyond the walls. Next day ensued a conference in which the eloquence of the Pope so acted upon the pious feeling of the King, that all the captured cities, - namely: Amelia, Orta, Polimmarzo (or Bomarzo), and Blera (or Bleda)—were handed over to the immediate Pontific dominion; besides which, the Longobard's generosity went so far as to restore those properties not yet held by the Papacy as sovereign, the farms and manors scattered over Italy, at Ancona, Osimo, Narni &c, besides the nearer « patrimonies of St. Peter » in the Sabina, wrested, thirty years previously, from their rightful owner; and all the prisoners hitherto taken in the Roman Duchy, or from among the troops of Ravenna, were unconditionally consigned to the Pontiff. On the Sunday following, Liutprand, after hearing the solemn Pontific Mass, sat down at the banquet-table of Zacharias; and it was perhaps the cheerfulness of his self-approving conscience which spoke in the words of the benevolent old king, after that repast: « that he had never in his life eaten with so much *gusto* ». But the richest banquet was that he had himself provided! On his return to Rome the Pontiff had all the honours of public triumph accorded him by a people who were, at least up to this period, not only loyal but enthusiastic in their attachment to their almost regal high priests: after all had assembled at the Pantheon, from thence moved a vast procession to St. Peter's for a solemn thanksgiving, officiated by the Pope at the head of his Clergy.

From Ratchis, who, two years after these events, mounted the Longobardic throne, Zacharias obtained a treaty of peace, for the benefit of all the Italian states, and pledged for 30 years duration, but which was broken, it is not apparent through whose fault, after the lapse of a much shorter interval. Ratchis, roused by some provocation, again appeared in arms, menacing all the cities of the Pentapolis, some of which

were probably occupied by him ; and soon commenced a vigorous siege of Perugia, hearing of which the energetic Pope hastened from Rome with a company of ecclesiastics, and several citizens of the highest class. This illustrious deputation having arrived in the camp before Perugia, Zacharias employed both eloquence and gifts to move the mind of Ratchis, and with such success that the pacified King was induced at once to raise the siege; besides which, with still greater triumph, the holy father enforced the lesson of contempt for earthly things with effect that finally led his royal disciple to give up all, crown, conquest, and family ties, and retire for the rest of his days into a cloister ! With Tasia, his queen, and Ratruda his daughter, he proceeded to Rome, and there did all three receive from Zacharias's hands the monastic habit ; Ratchis thence repairing to his chosen retreat of Monte Cassino ; his wife and daughter to the same district, where Tasia founded a monastery not far from the great Benedictine establishment. Among the many memories of war and vicissitude associated with that fine old city, Perugia, few are so fraught with moral interest as that eventful interview between Zacharias and Ratchis on the acclivity of those heights where stands, like a majestic eyrie proudly conspicuous, that former Etruscan capital, recently lost to the Papal government in inevitable result of the odium excited by the siege and sackage, 4859, in which all antecedents of its mild and wiser policy were transgressed, and ferocious mercenaries became, in this case, instruments of ruin to the Tiara they served. That remarkable episode of 774 confirms the persuasion that the secret of successes on the part of Zacharias must be sought for not only in his intellectual qualities, but in the subduing influences of a genuine sanctity. The other most memorable step taken by this Pope, was the decision on the subject referred to him by the Frankish Prince, now Sovereign in all but name, Pepin, who sent a bishop and an abbot to consult on the delicate question whether a dynasty fallen into hereditary feebleness and contempt might

not be set aside, to give place to a worthier claimant who already possessed the realities of power?

The Pontiff's recorded answer implies that it was lawful for the Magnates and People of France to recognise as their true King the Prince, or pfalzgraf, Pepin, and to depose from the throne Chilperic, then King but in name. Accordingly was effected the pacific revolution long prepared for: Chilperic was forced to quit crown and palace, and receive the tonsure, thenceforth to remain in a convent for the rest of his days; and Pepin was proclaimed King, receiving the holy unction from St. Boniface, the venerable Archbishop of Mayence. So far as the Papacy became responsible for this transaction, its importance, in the history we are here studying, was of the highest order; therein being conveyed in distinct meaning the avowal from the Church, that revolution in a just cause may be the legitimate exercise of right anterior to, and more sacred than, dynastic claims; that rulers are made for their people, not people for rulers; moreover, that the national will is the reasonably decisive and ultimate source of political dominion.

A strange spectacle is presented at this stage of the papal annals. A Roman priest being duly elected successor to Zacharias, as Stephen II, is at once duly installed in the Lateran palace; but on the morning of the third day after, this new Pontiff, taking his seat among prelates and courtiers for the despatch of affairs, suddenly changes countenance, becomes speechless, and after a few hours is a corpse, — leaving one more example:

How brief the cloudy space that parts the grave and throne.

During a pontificate of little more than five years, Stephen III, 752-57, witnessed, and contributed to bring about, the greatest and most brilliant augmentation of honours yet won for the Papacy. Astolphus, who had succeeded his brother Ratchis on the Longobardic throne, invaded the Exarchate

territories; possessed himself as well of the Pentapolis as of Ravenna; from whence he first issued a decree in the July of 751; and thus, after nearly 200 years' duration, was the feeble throne of the Greek Exarchs overthrown with a facility reminding us of the fate that overtook the Lorraine dynasty at a recent period in Italian story.

The invader next turned his attention towards the Roman Duchy; and, his meditated hostilities being soon made known at Rome, Pope Stephen ordered a penitential procession, fasts, and extraordinary devotions, to avert the danger; with his own hands did he carry through the streets the *Achirotypon* Image of the Saviour, regarded as an authentic portrait made by angelic hands, and for the first time mentioned on this occasion (1).

(1) The legend connected with this picture is that, begun by St. Luke shortly after the Ascension, it was left unfinished till the last touches had been added by an Angel — therefore « made without (human) hands », as the Greek epithet implies; that it was transported miraculously across the sea from Constantinople to Italy, and washed to land near Rome; or, according to another version, brought hither by Titus among the spoils from Jerusalem. Certain it is that it was deposited by Stephen III, about A. D. 752, in the *Sancta Sanctorum*, or chapel of St. Laurence, within the Lateran Palace, where it still remains, though that Papal residence has been swept away to give place to modern buildings. The practice of carrying it through the streets on certain festivals was kept up for several centuries; and, on being brought back to its shrine, the feet of the full-length figure used to be washed with a mixture of rose-water and other fragrant essences; but finally this observance was abolished by Pius V, on account of the disorders sometimes supervening in the procession held late on the Vigil of the Assumption. As now seen in the ancient chapel, at the summit of the *Scala Santa*, only the head, hands, and feet are visible, the rest being covered with silver laminae adorned with reliefs of sacred subjects, a gift from Innocent III. The picture may be regarded as a work of early Byzantine Art; the countenance being of the conventional ascetic type, by no means beautiful or pleasing, and almost blackened by



His embassies and rich presents having at last obtained a truce promised for forty years, Stephen had then recourse to the Emperor Constantine IV, who had inherited his father's prejudices in the Iconoclast cause; but, as usual, fair words were the utmost favours procurable from Byzantine sources. After this failure, the Pontiff applied to Pepin, and was invited by ambassadors to repair in person, and confide himself to the protection of the Frankish King. For the first time did a Pope set out on the journey northward, and cross the Alps to become the guest of foreigners. Stephen was met by Pepin and his sons at the distance of a league from the city of Pontyon in Pertois; the king dismounting to prostrate before the Pope and accompany him on foot, serving him as groom, till they reached the gates; but on the next day, the Pontiff and his clerical attendants knelt, in sackcloth and ashes, before Pepin, adjuring him by all that is most sacred to liberate the Roman people and Clergy from their foes; and in a

time; but we are informed that it is not even the original, only an exact copy stretched over the surface, probably of the time of Innocent III, that now meets our gaze on the few occasions this object can be seen — namely, the Saturday before Palm Sunday, the Octave of *Corpus Domini*, and the Vigil of the Assumption, when the Lateran capitular Clergy pass in solemn procession to the *Sancta Sanctorum*, and throw open the folding doors of the shrine above the altar, to exhibit this sacred treasure. Lately (1862) we have seen revived those mediaeval devotions: the *Achirotypon* having been removed to the Lateran church, thence to S. Maria Maggiore, and exposed, amid most picturesque magnificence, for several days, over the high altars of those two basilicas. The coldest heart might have been touched by those devout solemnities — the stately accessories and chanting throngs that accompanied the processions; the fervour of worshippers amid resplendent morning and evening rites. And as to the *aim* of these devotions, how could any Christian be offended? — As to their form, indeed, grave objections might be urged; as also against the attempt made at the time to revive the credit of all that legendary fancy once devised in regard to this picture, and its origin.

secret conference which ensued, it is said that Pepin not only promised protection to the utmost extent of his means, but also pledged himself, after having conquered the Exarchate and Pentapolis, to bestow those provinces and cities upon the successors of St. Peter, instead of making restitution to the Greek Emperor. Soon afterwards Stephen repeated at Paris the coronation of Pepin, and also of his sons, Charles and Carlomanus, on both of whom he at the same time conferred the title of Roman Patrician. The king then hastened to cross the Alps and descend into the plains of northern Italy; laying siege to Pavia, he soon extorted from the rash but feeble-minded Astolphus a submissive treaty, backed by solemn oaths, to make cession to Rome of all the cities occupied through conquest. The Frankish forces returned northwards, victorious, almost without bloodshed; and the Pope left Paris, so as to arrive at Rome before the close of the year 754. In the January following, Astolphus, regardless of all oaths, appeared as an invader before Rome and commenced a siege, during which the Campagna was devastated, and these pious foes showed themselves particularly eager to carry away the bones of Martyrs from the Catacombs, now ransacked and systematically despoiled! It was during this siege of three months duration, carried on with every circumstance of outrage, that Pope Stephen adopted the expedient, much blamed by some historians, of addressing a letter to the Frankish king and nation in the name of, and as actually proceeding from, the Apostle Peter — enjoining him to liberate his own tomb and his successor's person, under threat of chastisements temporal and eternal!

Absurd as it would be to impute to this document the character of forgery, one may nevertheless agree with the strictures of Fleury that it is « full of equivocations; that the Church is there made to signify, not the assembly of the faithful, but the temporal possessions consecrated to God; the flock of Christ are understood as the bodies, not the souls, of men; the temporal promises of the ancient Law are mixed

up with the spiritual ones of the Gospel; and the most sacred motives of religion employed for an affair of state ». It seems, in fact, to imply a transfer of the claims of Catholicism from the order of spiritual to that of secular things; a dangerous sanction to the idea of winning celestial favour by the bestowal of wealth or power on the clerical body; as also to the doctrine that the accumulating of mundane advantages is among the essential objects set before the Institution founded by Christ in His Church.

It is nevertheless possible that the Pontiff's motives may have been quite pure; and his expedient was at once successful; for Pepin again crossed the Alps at the head of an army, defeated the Longobards in the pass of Susa (or Chiuse), and laid siege anew to Pavia. Astolphus, who at this intelligence had hastened to withdraw from the walls of Rome, finding himself at the last extremity, submitted to a heavy tribute, and to the abandonment of the twenty-two cities he had taken by arms. Then it was, within the walls of Pavia, that Pepin made, in written formula, the celebrated Act of Donation to the Holy See, comprising (as we learn from Anastasius, who declares he had seen the original) Ravenna, Rimini, Fano, Cesena, Sinigaglia, Iesi, Forlimpopoli, Forlì, Montefeltro, Urbino, Cagli, Gubbio, Comacchio, and Narni (1), besides seven other towns of less note. The Abbot of St. Denis was sent, with deputies named by Astolphus, to pass through all those cities hitherto under the Exarchate, collect their keys, and receive hostages from among their principal inhabitants; subsequently to repair to Rome, and lay those keys together with the document of donation on the high altar of St. Peter's.

That original deed, drawn up at Pavia, is no longer extant. Within late years we have seen all, every town and village it comprised, in such bounteous liberality towards the

(1) The last a town in the Roman Duchy, but wrested from that state, many years before these events, by the Duke of Spoleto.

Holy See, wrested from that government almost without an effort at resistance; in certain instances with the manifest acquiescence and satisfaction of all citizens; and this dream-like evanescence seems to evince how unsubstantial the nature of those arbitrary, however at the time admissible, foundations on which the validity of Pepin's gift reposes.

Paul I (757-'67), who (a rare occurrence in these annals) succeeded to his own brother in the Papacy, presents an example of apostolic virtues on which it is good to dwell at this epoch when the Spirit of the world is beginning to make inroad within the charmed circle. This holy man used to pass through the streets at night, with a few intimate attendants, to visit the suffering and poor, the captive, the widow and orphan, leaving abundant alms, and often opening the prison doors to deliver from bondage or peril to life; paying the debts of those oppressed by usurers, and otherwise showing that the Roman Pontiff must, at this date, have enjoyed at least the full prerogative of mercy, if not other royal attributions. Still, however, were pontific letters dated by the year of the Greek Emperor; and we have another proof of the now vaguely defined and indeed transitory state of Rome's government in the epistle addressed by the « Senate and People » to King Pepin, « Patrician of the Romans », acknowledging a gracious missive from that Prince to their aggregate body, thanking him for his protection extended to the true Faith and to the Roman People, beseeching him completely to liberate them from their hostile neighbours the Longobards, while protesting their fidelity towards Holy Church and their Pontiff, whose virtues they justly extoll, and to whom they give the title *dominus noster* — this, with other evidence of the times, serving to confirm the conclusion that Rome was still under a species of Republican Constitution, at the head of which stood the Pontiff (Muratori, *Annali ann.* 763). The now occupant of the Longobardic throne, Desiderius, had ascended it mainly through the aid of Stephen III, who had exerted himself in his cause against the rival pretender, Ratchis, the



latter having quitted his monastery, to struggle once more for the world's prizes, on the death of Astolphus without heirs direct. In the hope of the Pontiff's support, this King had promised every thing that justice could demand; — the surrender of the towns yet occupied, though comprised in Pepin's gift, and other additions to those newly founded Papal states. All these promises were set aside so soon as his object had been obtained; and Paul I. wrote a letter of complaints to Pepin, from which we learn that the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento had, during the siege of Pavia or after the death of Astolphus, again cast off the vassalage to their King, placing themselves under the new Frankish Sovereignty. After a war carried on against those Duchies, and a cruel devastation of the lands round the recently annexed cities of the Pentapolis, Desiderius visited Rome, where the Pope solemnly urged him to restore Imola, Bologna, Osimo, and Ancona « to St. Peter », according to promises long since made, but, if now renewed, again in the event broken. Desiderius had demanded as condition the liberation of the Longobard hostages led away by Pepin; and we are sorry to find the example of political disingenuousness, the « paltering in a double sense », on the part of such a virtuous ruler as Paul I., who sent two letters to that King, one begging him to liberate the hostages and keep peace with the Longobards, the other in a sense directly opposite!

One of the objects for which this Pontiff exerted himself was the visitation of Catacombs, and removal of the bodies of Martyrs from thence in precaution against the risks of further spoliation, such as that perseveringly carried on with pious fraud by Astolphus. The proceeding now adopted was one that contributed to the final suppression of devotional observance and assemblage in those now rifled cemeteries. With chanted psalms and hymns the precious relics were transferred in processional pomp to different churches within the City; and it seems that this example gave impulse to the general usage of such *translation*, whenever it was desired

to supply churches and altars with skeletons or divided bodies from sacred tombs, Singular that the Christian feeling should have imagined the highest honour in what, to Paganism, was sacrilegious outrage against the Dead! We read (v. Fleury) of the usage, at this period prevailing in Germany, of carrying relics on the campaign and into the battlefield. In later ages we shall see them immured at the summit of towers or cupolas as safeguard against lightning!

The paternal mansion of Paul I was consecrated by him as a monastery, dedicate to the Popes St. Stephen and St. Sylvester, enriched with several martyrs' bodies from Catacombs, as well as by donations of farms and lands. In this monastic church was introduced the Greek psalmody to be kept up day and night; whence it appears that its cloisters became one of the several asylums opened in Rome to the multitude of monks driven from the East by Iconoclast persecution. Nothing save the square brick tower with stories of arcades, and three columns of the atrium built into a modern front-wall, now remains of its ancient structure in the church known, since the XIII century, as *S. Silvestro in Capite*, a cognomen deriving from its most revered relic, the head of St. John the Baptist, said to be enshrined here—*exposed* we cannot say, for it is merely the outside [of a precious reliquary that is seen above the high altar on St. John's festival.

Stephen IV (768-72) was consecrated after a vacancy of more than a year, during which the Papal See was occupied by an intruder in whose tragic story we see how much of worldly ambition and other unholy passion had begun to gather round that sacred throne. So soon as Paul I had expired, a powerful family, at whose head was the Duke Toto, governor of Nepi, raised a company of troops in Tuscany and enrolled the peasants of the Campagna, at the head of which force he entered Rome by the Porta S. Pancrazio, and in his own house caused to be elected to the pontificate Constantine, one of his brothers, still a layman, whom this faction compelled the Bishop of Palestrina first to ordain priest and af-

terwards, with assistance of two other prelates, to consecrate as Pope. After that aristocratic usurpation had lasted for a year, Christophorus, the Primicerius, with his son Sergius, obtained an armed force from the Longobardic King and from different towns in the Spoleto Duchy, and took possession first of the Salarian bridge over the Anio and the S. Pancrazio gate, thence marching into the City, where their cause had supporters. A contest now ensued, in which Toto himself was slain; Constantine and his other brother took refuge at the Lateran, and remained locked up in one of the chapels adjoining the Baptistery, whilst another faction, now suddenly formed, raised up another Antipope, one Philip, a priest from the monastery of S. Vitus on the Esquiline Hill, who held his shadowy state just long enough to give benediction to the people from the Lateran palace, and entertain at the customary inaugural banquet the chief personages of the Clergy and Army. Deposed and driven back to his cloister the next day, this usurper vanished for ever from the historic scene; and through the influence of Christophorus was accomplished another election with the requisite concurrence of Clergy, Magnates, Military and People; Stephen, priest of the *S. Cecilia* church, being now unanimously chosen. A tumult ensued in the popular rage against the fallen usurper, no longer allowed to remain in peace at the monastery, S. Saba, where he had been confined, and from whose walls Constantine, his brother, a bishop and two other persons, his real or supposed accomplices, were dragged through the streets to be publicly blinded. Soon afterwards was held a numerous Council, attended by the Italian Bishops, at the Lateran, with the principal object of anathematizing the Iconoclasts, and also providing against the repetition of such a scandal as the intrusion of laymen, or of any candidate supported by violent means, into the episcopacy. The miserable Constantine was introduced before this assembly, and asked how he had presumed, being a layman, to usurp the Papal throne? Entreating for mercy, he alleged in his defence the

example of an Archbishop of Ravenna and a Bishop of Naples, alike raised to their dignity from the laic state; on which priests and prelates had the barbarity to strike that face made sacred by suffering, fiercely driving him away from their presence in this synod presided by Pope Stephen, witness of the revolting scene! Another civic revolution disturbed this pontificate. King Pepin being deceased, Desiderius professed himself ready to satisfy the just claims of the Pope in respect to the much-disputed donation, and repaired to Rome to hold an interview with him at St. Peter's. The King had already formed a party in his interest within the City, aiming at the alienation of Stephen IV from the sons of Pepin, who now jointly reigned; but Christophorus and Sergius, adverse to the Longobardic interest, collected an irregular army from the Campagna, from the towns of Tuscany and Perugia, with which force they attempted to oppose the entrance of Desiderius, causing all the gates to be shut and one walled up; but in the meantime another party appeared, headed by a Chamberlain of the Pope, who entered into treaty with Desiderius, whilst those enrolled by Christophorus and Sergius began to fall off from their cause. Stephen IV invited those leaders to submit to his arbitration at the Vatican, whither they repaired; but were there at once abandoned to their enemies, those powerful ecclesiastics to whom the Pope had owed his election. Not contented with their downfall, the party of the Chamberlain induced the King to give them up into their hands, and both father and son were dragged away to be publicly blinded, near the bridge of S. Angelo, in the same manner as the Antipope, overthrown by their agency, had suffered such atrocious outrage. Christophorus survived only three days; but Sergius was left to linger out the rest of his life in the dungeons of the Lateran, which palace had then its subterraneans, perhaps as horrid as other mediæval prisons. Pope Stephen endeavoured to dissuade the jointly-reigning Frankish kings from a projected double marriage of the eldest son and daughter of Pepin with



the daughter and son of Desiderius; and his epistle written in this object, distinguished by a coarse malignity, was laid on the shrine of St. Peter, actually under the sacramental vessels, at the pontific Communion, by way of sanctifying — lamentable instance of the now prevailing disposition to use sacred things for profane and selfish purposes! The appeal had no effect, in regard to one of those marriages at least; and Charlemagne wedded the unhappy princess, soon to be put away without regard for right or innocence, whose story claims heart-felt compassion, and in the *Adelchi* of Manzoni is wrought into some of the most pathetic scenes in the Italian Drama.

We turn with pleasure from the dark and confused incidents, unredeemed by any light of sanctity, which the historian has to unravel in the pontificate of Stephen IV, to pass to that of Adrian I (772-'95), who, alike energetic and estimable, contributed by talents as well as virtues to confirm for the Papacy that high political position now legally secured. The dawn of a brighter day begins to illumine the historic scene with one of those manifestations of Providence we cannot fail to recognise in the ascendancy of great Genius; for from this period it is Charlemagne who becomes the chief actor in the eventful drama. Adrian I had not occupied the Papal chair two months before Desiderius seized Faenza, Comacchio, and the entire Duchy of Ferrara, all comprised in the donation of Pepin. To remonstrances from Rome he replied that these states should be ceded after a personal interview had been granted; after the Pope had anointed, and recognised as kings the two sons of Charlemagne's lately deceased brother, both fugitives, with their mother, after being denied the rights of succession by their uncle, at the court in Pavia. Adrian refused the interview unless under condition of the previous restitution. Desiderius, with his son Adelchis (or Adelgisus), and the nephews of Charlemagne, now set out at the head of an army for Rome; but the energetic Pope speedily collected a garrison from among the troops of Campania, Tuscany,

Perugia, and the Pentapolis; transported to places of safety all the treasures in the two chief basilicas; and made all arrangements towards preparing his capital for vigorous defence. The invader advanced as far as Viterbo, was there met by four bishops, who intimated the penalties of excommunication should he presume to cross the frontiers of the Roman Duchy. That dread weapon, not yet vulgarized by constant use for worldly ends, had then all its mysterious efficacy over subject minds; and the King, overawed and stricken powerless with an army under his command, at once drew back, abandoning his hostile projects. Charlemagne, after repeated communications with Rome, and after being invited by Adrian to employ armed force in his cause, first tried pacific means for securing the newly conferred states, and offered payment to Desiderius, 44,000 gold solidi (about 286,000 francs) for the cession of all those cities bestowed on Rome — nominally on St. Peter. This proving fruitless, the invasion was resolved upon which affords the most striking example yet beheld of the ability in the Church to direct and profit by the antagonisms of the world (1). The

(1) Agnellus states that Charlemagne was incited not only by the Pope, but by the Archbishop of Ravenna to intervene for the deliverance of Italy, and that by that Prelate was sent the deacon Martin, (whose adventures form so fine an episode in Manzoni's tragedy), to guide the invading army from their camp in the valley of Susa across a yet untraversed Alpine passage — conjectured to be that which descends into the valley of Aosta; and thus was secured victory to the Franks, who surprised their foe either at the rear, or at the flank, where no assault had been apprehended. The fortifications called « Chiuse » were a line of walls and towers, strengthened by Desiderius, which effectually guarded the outlets of the Susa valley, and some ruins of which were seen by the Monk of Novalesa (the picturesque Benedictine Monastery, lately suppressed, in that Alpine ravine), whose chronicle of these events, given by Muratori (*Ber. It.* Tom. II, part 2), was written about the middle of the XI century. It appears that the Frankish army, while encamped on the northern side of those fortifications, were quite una-

whole army of the Franks was led into Italy across two of the Alpine passes (773); the Longobards suffered defeat, not indeed without a gallant struggle, in the valley of Susa; and Desiderius was pursued in his flight to Pavia. Several Longobardic cities submitted to the invader without resistance, whilst those that held out, Verona and Pavia, the retreats of the King and his son, were simultaneously besieged. During the prolonged blockade of Pavia, Charlemagne made his first visit to Rome, there received with all the honours formerly accorded to Exarchs: met on his arrival, at a mile's distance, by all the troops and by a peaceful array of children carrying palms and olive-branches, greeting him with songs and acclamations; nearer to the walls, by ecclesiastics with crosses and sacred standards, at the sight of which he dismounted from his horse, thence to proceed on foot, with a train of princes and officers, to St. Peter's, where the Pope with all the Clergy and a multitude of citizens were awaiting the king. As he ascended the stairs exterior to the basilica, he knelt and kissed each step — a pious usage long afterwards kept up; and at the summit the two Potentates (for as such

ble to overcome the defence sustained by the Longobards. A learned investigation into this epoch of Italian History, and the circumstances attending the fall of the Longobard dominion, is found in the appendix to Manzoni's *Adelchi*; and the pathetic interest there investing the beautifully-drawn character of Ermengarda is enhanced by the proof how unmerited were her wrongs. To oppose and brand with infamy the lawless divorces desired so often by licentious kings, was among the honourable offices bravely sustained by Popes in the Middle Ages; but the tacit approval of Charlemagne's cruelty towards his blameless wife, on the part of Stephen IV, exemplifies the effect of mundane ambition upon what ought to be the especial attribute and glory of sacerdotal power.

Muratori supplies the interesting fact of one protest against this wrong, on the part of St. Adelard, the cousin of Charlemagne, who quitted his court to become a monk, rather than sanction even by his presence such a procedure as that divorce and the illegal marriage that ensued.

may be now classed the Pontiff also) cordially embraced; then passing into the church, made vows of friendship, personal and national, at the high altar; after which the Frankish king made progress through the City, visited all the churches, and left some rich offering for each. It is remarkable that Charlemagne had, before this entry, requested the *permission* of the Pope to visit the different churches in Rome for his devotions at Easter, the festival now recurring. After three days given to the observances of that sacred season, Adrian urged his request for the formal ratifying of Pepin's donation, when at once ensued that memorably renewed endowment of the Papacy, now drawn up in a deed of confirmation laid on the altar of St. Peter, and which comprised so great an extent of territory, according to the report of Anastasius and Leo Ostiensis, that Muratori supposes error must have crept into those writers' text in this reference. What, we may ask, could avail, or how were effectuated such territorial gifts as that of Istria? and as to the Duchy of Spoleto, though a species of right seems to have been conceded to the Pope, such was probably no more than the claim to some annual tribute; that province in fact, till long after these proceedings, remaining incorporated with the Kingdom of Italy under Dukes, the feudal vassals of the Emperor. The Sabina district, whose mountains form a beautiful feature in the landscape Pope Adrian might have enjoyed from the windows of his Palace, was not comprised in the territories under his sway, but in those of Spoleto, as evident from a letter to Charlemagne in which he desires restitution « to St. Peter » of Rome's patrimonies within that province, bestowed on the Church about a hundred years before, destined both for the maintenance of lights at St Peter's, and for alms (probably in kind) to the poor of Rome. Sabina became completely incorporated with the Papal states, A. D. 939, being then severed from the Spoleto Duchy and placed under the government of a Marquis, or *Comes*. For a general view of the territorial aggrandizement now secured



to the Holy See, we may cite from the *Art de vérifier les dates*, where its limits are defined: — the Exarchate and Pentapolis between the Adriatic and the Apennines; an extent of maritime Tuscany from the Cecena to the Marta river, including Grosseto, Orbetello, and the Ombrone, an insignificant portion of which district, south of Monta'to and the Fiora river, still remains to the Papal States; also the inland district advancing from the Marta to the source of the Tiber, including Perugia and its Duchy, along the right bank of that river. After having subjected Beneventum in a war against its Duke, Adelgisus, Charlemagne added Aquino, Teano, and other cities of that territory, which its ruler was forced to concede to Rome; and ultimately six other towns of Tuscany, the most important being Viterbo, still retained by the Papacy, after a brief alienation, through the successful arms of Italian invaders, in 1860. As to the donation of Modena, Reggio, Parma, Piacenza, and Mantua, included by the biographer of Adrian, Anastasius, the evidence is extremely vague; and the idea that all those cities were comprised in the gift of the Frankish King has been rejected (v. Muratori, ann. 777). It is inferrible indeed that a species of moral superintendence over the whole of Italy was entrusted by Charlemagne to Pope Adrian, so high the confidence inspired by the virtues and abilities of that Pontiff.

In answer to a letter of the king complaining that the Romans had been practising traffic in Christian slaves with the Saracens, Adrian showed that such had not been carried on in the Roman Duchy, but only along those Mediterranean shores under the direct dominion of Charlemagne, where slaves had been sold in considerable number to the Greek traders; that he himself had in consequence sent letters, but in vain, to the Duke of Tuscany, Allone, requiring him to equip as many vessels as possible in order to capture and burn those Greek trading ships; that he had likewise caused certain of those ships to be burned in the harbour of Centumcellae, and their crews to be detained

in prison on account of the crime committed in such hateful commerce —\*this being one of the first among many instances of the persistent and righteous war against slavery by the Pontiffs. We cannot equally admire another proceeding of Adrian I, that displays, indeed, vigorous activity, but also a restless ambition. After the withdrawal of the Frankish armies from Italy, the Neapolitan Greeks had entered into treaty with the Duke of Beneventum, Arigisus, then in correspondence with, and cognizant of, the designs of Adelchis, now known by the title « Patrician of Sicily »; an armed occupation of Terracina, counselled by that Duke, was the sequel; and that frontier town, probably included in the donation of Charlemagne, after being wrested from the Greeks, was offered by Adrian to the Neapolitans in exchange for certain forfeited patrimonies of the Church within their Duchy. In the Pope's epistolary style the Neapolitans were *nefandissimi*, and the Greeks « hated of God », whilst, backed by such epithets, the request was preferred to Charlemagne that he would hasten not only to recover Terracina, but also to besiege Naples and Gaeta, in order, if possible, to subject those cities alike to the co-participant dominion of the Papacy and the Frankish King — *sub vestra atque nostra ditione*. No such attempt was made by that wise monarch; and the projected invasion of Italy by Adelchis, planned in correspondence with the Beneventan Duke from Sicily, was frustrated by the death of the latter, 787. We may observe how striking the proof supplied in this passage as to the deteriorating effects of political power on the higher and spiritual attributes once so luminous in the Papacy! — the more remarkable, indeed, in as much as it is one of St. Peter's successors entitled to rank among the most estimable, who presents this example of a Christian Bishop eager to stir up warfare, to bring down the invader upon the states of a legally established government, in the hope of territorial aggrandizement to himself! For the honour of the Papacy, however, is the

fact that, even before the defeat of the Longobards, several citizens of Spoleto and Rieti repaired to Rome for the act of voluntary submission to its sway, and, in sign of the self-chosen subjection, had their long hair and beards shaved according to Roman fashion! A still larger deputation from the Spoleto Duchy arrived soon, with the request of being admitted « into the service of St. Peter », whilst adopting the Roman fashion as to hair and beard! Such a demand of course could not be denied; and those citizens having in the sequel elected a duke, Hildebrand, their choice was confirmed by the Pope. The inhabitants of Fermo, those of Ancona, Osimo and Castel di Felicità soon followed this example of voluntary submission to the Papal sceptre.

After a siege of eight months, Pavia surrendered to the youthful conqueror (774). Desiderius and his wife were carried captive into France, there allowed an honourable retreat, both to spend their last days in the cloister, where the deposed King won reputation for eminent sanctity. Adelchis fled for refuge to Constantinople; and thus ended the Longobardic kingdom in Italy, ruined by its rash hostilities against that sacerdotal power whose rapidly rising ascendancy was due to such combinations of favourable circumstance, or rather to the prevailing tendencies of mind and religious idea. At Charlemagne's second visit to Rome (781) the Pope anointed his two sons, Pepin and Louis, as kings of Italy and Aquitaine, the former having been baptized by his hand the day previously — and in thus consenting to raise a child to the throne of the Italian kingdom, the Pontiff certainly seemed to recognise at least a theoretic sovereignty superior to, and valid within the limits of, his own.

Among the many noticeable events of this long pontificate, the close of the Iconoclast struggle, and ultimate triumph of the principles maintained in this question by Rome, are important. Promoted through the piety or zeal of a convert Empress, the accord between the Greek and Oriental prelates in favour of sacred images, was celebrated in the seventh

general Council held at Nicaea, 787, with assistance of two Legates sent by the Pope, whom ecclesiastical historians represent as proper presidents of the assemblage, and of other legates from the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, besides 350 bishops. An attempt to hold this Council in the previous year at Constantinople, on invitation of the Empress Irene, was baffled by a characteristic outburst of Greek fanaticism — an armed interference, urged on by certain dissentient bishops, and led by some officers of the garrison, who, at the head of the military under their command, rushed with drawn swords into the assembly, and drove away prelates and legates by violence: The new Patriarch of Constantinople sent his profession of Catholic faith to the Pope; and for an interval the Eastern and Western churches became reunited. Great services were rendered by Adrian I to the interests of Art and public monuments. Among various works for repair and embellishment of churches, was the restoring of the roof of St. Peter's, for which a *magister* (master mason) was desired from, and sent by, Charlemagne, first to explore the Spoleto district for obtaining the suitable timber, not to be found within Roman territories; — the fortifying walls were rebuilt; and the restoration of antique aqueducts was actively carried on, that of Trajan, one hundred of whose arches were in ruin, being now made to supply water to the fountains before St. Peter's, and to the pilgrims' hospital near, (where took place the ceremony of the *lavanda* on Holy Thursday): the Transtiberine quarter being thus also provided for. Agrippa's aqueduct, ruinous and supplying but a slight stream, became again an abundant channel sufficient for almost the whole City; and alike was restored the Marcian Aqueduct, now known by the barbaric name *Acqua Iobia*, probably from *Jovius*, a cognomen assumed by Diocletian, to whom some portion of its arcades has been ascribed; also that most magnificent of all such structures, the Claudian, slightly repaired under some earlier pontificate, but not fully so till the time of Adrian, who employed a multi-



titude of Campagna peasants on this task. Still more to his honour are this Pope's systematic charities, — as the daily feeding of 100 poor under the portico of the Lateran, where each received 1lb of bread, a cup of wine (about the modern *foglietta*), with a porringer of soup and meat — which eleemosinary banquet was represented in a picture on that same portico's walls; all these bounties being provided out of the produce of a single estate (*domus culta*), Capracorum, in the Veii district, inherited by Adrian from his parents, improved and enlarged under his care, whence ample store of corn, legumes, and wine used annually to be brought to the magazines of the Lateran. A comparatively flourishing state of letters and of musical practice at Rome, in this period, is inferrible from the desire of Charlemagne to conduct with him thence into France some of the best singers from the pontifical college, in order to teach the *canto fermo* to the Clergy of his Kingdom; and likewise some professors of Grammar (1), for diffusing liberal studies in the same country. Leo III, (795–816), elected by the Clergy, Nobility, and People, was consecrated at once without reference to any foreign potentate; but almost his first act was to send an embassy to Charlemagne with those significant gifts, the Keys of the Confessional (or shrine) of St. Peter (2), and the sacred *vexillum*, as represented in the above-mentioned mosaic of the Lateran triclinium: objects to be proffered to the king with the request that he would depute some magnate to receive the oaths of fealty and subjection (*fedem atque subjectionem*, says Egin-

(1) Under the designation *Grammatica*, we should remember, were then comprised the studies of the Latin language, Oratory, Poetry, classic literature; in short, what we now understand as a liberal education within limits allowed by the then intellectual conditions of Europe.

(2) A quaint richly decorated key, with gilding and enamel, still to be seen in the *Guardaroba* of St. Peter's, is probably the sole extant example of such a consecrated object.

hard) towards himself — words that accord with the higher sense attaching to those gifts, as symbols of conceded sovereignty. That the banner implies dominion seems conveyed as distinctly as symbolism can speak, in that [remarkable mosaic; and on the coins of the Venetian Doges it appears with like significance. A sense somewhat similar, attaching to the sacred key, is conveyed in the words of Gregory III, addressed to Charles Martel: — *Claves confessionis beati Petri, quos vobis ad regnum direximus* (Muratori, *ann.* 789); as such was unmistakeably intended in both symbols when the Keys of the Holy Sepulchre and of Calvary, with a banner, were sent to Charlemagne by the Patriarch of Jerusalem after the Caliph Haroun had paid him the homage of conceding an honorary protectorate over the holy City, as stated by Eginhard, and alluded to by a contemporary Saxon poet (Du Chesne, *Tom.* 2, *Rer. Franc.*):

Adscribique locum sanctum Hierosolymorum  
Concessit propriae Caroli semper ditioni.

Vain, therefore, are the arguments ingeniously sustained to establish that no sort of sovereign power was exercised, or theoretically claimed, at Rome by the Carlovingian Emperors. That the feeling of the age tended to admit rather a limited jurisdiction in the Papacy, subordinate in temporal things at least to a higher foreign tribunal, seems indeed supported by various testimonies.

An atrocious and mysterious conspiracy overclouded the pontificate of Leo III — its leaders, scandalous to relate, being ecclesiastics of high position. Whilst walking in the procession on St. Mark's day with all the Roman Clergy, followed by a devout multitude, an armed company, led by Paschal the *Primicerius*, and Campulo the *Sacellarius* (both nephews of Adrian I), rushed from an obscure street opposite the church of St. Sylvester, seized and threw the Pope on the ground, stripped off his vestments, beat him with clubs, and

after attempting to tear out his eyes and cut out his tongue, left him bleeding and speechless on the pavement. All the spectators fled; and after the unfortunate Pontiff had been abandoned in this state, without one to pity or succour, the assassins returned to drag him into the church, and renew their murderous outrages before the altar! Left as it were between life and death in the monastery of St. Sylvester, the victim was afterwards taken to that of St. Erasmus on the Coelian Hill; but thence rescued, and conducted to the Vatican by a chamberlain, with a few other faithful followers, who alone among Rome's citizens made any effort to oppose this atrocious revolt against their spiritual and temporal sovereign! A Longobard prince set the example of generous interposition — Guinegisus, Duke of Spoleto, who now appeared before St. Peter's with an armed force, and escorted the Pontiff, with every mark of honour, to that city. The recovery of sight and speech by Leo was interpreted as miraculous; but ecclesiastical writers have admitted the idea of a natural healing, due to failure in the atrocious attempt to inflict such bodily injury as designed (v. Catalani, notes to Muratori, ann. 799). Guinegisus having hastened to inform Charlemagne of these events, that King invited Leo to repair to meet him at Paderborn, where a most honourable reception awaited the revered sufferer; all the troops being drawn up, and made to prostrate on his approach, while Charlemagne alighted from his horse, bowed low before him, and embraced him — this scene presenting, indeed, an appropriate abstract of the contrast between the triumphs of the Papacy abroad and its frequent humiliations, through violence or revolutionary impetus, at home! After some weeks of friendly intercourse and festivities shared by the King and Pontiff amid all pomp and homage of royalty, was undertaken the journey back to Rome, in which the Archbishops of Cologne and Salzburg, other prelates, and two counts formed the escort of the Pope, now received at all the towns passed through

with highest honours, and on his approach to his own City met at the Milvian bridge by the local Clergy and Military, the *scholae* (or universities) of foreign nations — Franks, Saxons, Longobards ec., the Nuns, and noble matrons, besides a multitude with banners and standards, singing hymns and shouting welcome. In the midst of such ovations did Leo pass to St. Peter's, there to celebrate solemn Mass, and give Communion, *in both kinds*, to all present. On the following day the Frankish magnates held a high court of justice in the Lateran triclinium, and cited the conspirators, whose cause continued on trial during more than a week, but as yet without result in any definitive sentence. A list of accusations against the Pope had been forwarded to Charlemagne — and several ecclesiastical estates on the Campagna had been devastated by his enemies. The crime of the latter sufficiently condemns their cause; but we possess only obscure and partial evidence as to this whole episode. The report of the event by Anastasius gives but one side of the question; and we are left to conjecture what the accusations against Leo III really were, whether referring to his character or government? — Scarcely to the former, we may conclude, seeing that all we know of this Pontiff presents him in the light of sanctified manners, as a pastor zealous for doctrine and discipline — if to the latter, this revolt would be the more remarkable, because first in the long series of antagonisms, proceeding from the higher classes in Rome, to the temporal power. The penetrating mind of Charlemagne might have been convinced that in surrounding the Papal throne with new honours he had exposed it to new dangers; that, rather than raising it to the height, he had reduced it to the level of earthly monarchies. Consideration for the perilous position in which the Head of the Church still remained was one motive that induced the king to undertake another Italian expedition (799), at the head of his army, after explaining his purpose and reporting the circumstances of the Pontiff to the diet at Mayence. Arriving with his



court, he was first received by Leo at Nomentum (now represented by the miserable little town of Lamentana) twelve miles distant from Rome, where the two dined together, the Pope afterwards returning to prepare a state-reception in the City for the morrow. After the usual solemnities, and devotions for seven days, an assemblage, convoked by Charlemagne, of all the Prelates and Abbots, all the Roman and French nobility, was held at St. Peter's: the king and Pope having taken their seats in the midst, the former intimated an investigation into the charges against the latter, on which the Bishops and Abbots present made unanimous protest that none could presume to call the supreme Pontiff to judgment, seeing that the Apostolic See, chief among all churches, was itself judge in all ecclesiastical causes, nor to be judged by any. Leo responded to this, that he desired to follow the usage of his predecessors; and then ensued an extraordinary scene, displaying the unrivalled height in moral power, the inviolable rank and credit now enjoyed by the Papacy, as it were beyond the shocks of all earthly accident! Ascending the ambon, and placing on his head the Gospel and the Cross, Leo in a loud voice and in solemn terms protested his perfect innocence as to every charge advanced by his persecutors, adding that he in this manner justified himself without being judged or constrained by any, nor by any law required so to proceed, but simply through spontaneous resolve. All the Prelates and priests then began to chant litanies and the thanksgiving *Te Deum*; this exculpation being accepted, and, in moral effect, complete, through procedure that presupposes a certain generous and enthusiastic feeling, for whose predominance at this period the Papacy itself deserves the credit. After some days, ensued another legal process against the conspirators, who were examined and finally sentenced to death before Charlemagne's tribunal; their punishment being commuted, however, into the lenient one of exile to France, without bodily injury, through the merciful interposition of the Pontiff.

The Christmas-day of 799 (1) having arrived, Charlemagne attended the Papal High Mass at St. Peter's, and was still prostrate before the Apostle's shrine, when, at the close of those rites, the Pontiff approached and set on his head a golden diadem; all the vast multitude present repeating three times the acclamations probably first dictated by the Clergy: *Life and victory to Charles, most pious and august, crowned by God, the great and pacific Emperor!* After this Leo proceeded to anoint with the holy oil both Charlemagne and his son Pepin. This eventful drama seems to have been presented to the popular mind as brought about through act of the Pope without participation or fore-knowledge on the part of the elect Emperor, who (as Eginhard states) declared that he would not have entered the church if aware of what was to ensue. Such professions might be made for the sake of decorum, but scarcely believed; and the letters between successive Popes and the Frankish King contain indications of gradually matured design, concerted on both sides, for this re-establishment of the Western Empire, which may be considered as the final rupture with the old civilization represented by the corrupt Church and degenerate autocrats of Constantinople, for substitution of a new principle, infusing life and vigour into reconstituted nationalities. The Papacy thus became the founder of a new Civilization, that revolved round the centre formed by two Chiefs, henceforth sharing supreme power in the spiritual and temporal order; the Pontifical naturally allowed precedence in idea; the Imperial regarded as its delegate, deputed to the headship of Christendom, in regard to mundane interests, by consent of Christ's Vicar, source and representative of all legitimate authority upon earth. How immensely the Roman See was to gain in credit through this new order of things, is apparent; nor could any measure

(1) The year 800 is the better-known date here in question, but according to the ancient computation, which dated the new year from Christmas.

have more confirmed the ascendancy of this sacerdotal sway, or more elevated the character of that ideal attaching to St. Peter's throne, than did this courageous step of Leo III, in which he himself appears not less conspicuous than the monarch crowned by his hands (1). Anastasius gives a dazzling catalogue of the offerings made by Charlemagne to Rome's chief basilicas after this coronation: an altar-table of silver, vessels of gold, and a golden *corona* studded with gems, presented to St. Peter's immediately after the ceremony; to the Lateran, a jewelled processional Cross, a silver ciborium (or baldacchino) with columns, a Gospel in gold and jewelled binding; to St Paul's, a silver altar, and « diverse vessels of marvellous size » for sacred use.

With the event of that Christmas-day at St. Peter's closes an epoch pregnant of great results for the Papacy and for Christendom. As to the conduct of those mainly instrumental in creating the new position for the Holy See, we observe an apparent purity of intention, and the consistency evincing consciousness of right. In the implied satisfaction and tacit acquiescence of so many populations handed over, without the slightest reference to their wishes, from secular to ecclesiastical Dominion, we find ground for the inference that throughout these, and indeed much later ages, the temporal sway of the Popes was gladly submitted to, and felt to be more mild and enlightened than that of secular princes. In what precise sense the titles of sacerdotal sovereignty were understood by those who conferred, or those who first exercised it, seems scarce definable. Certain it is that Charlemagne claimed the privileges of the Roman Patriciate in

(1) « Thus was accomplished the greatest among events that have taken place during more than a thousand years in European story, that which once dominated over its entire course in fact, and has continued to do so in name till our own times; an event which, most fortunate as, without doubt, it seemed in those days, eventually, as is alike certain, proved a misfortune to many nations, and most especially such to the Italians ». Balbo.

the highest acceptation, exercising supreme jurisdiction, with power of life and death, from his tribunal, in the Papal City ; as, in his absence, like powers were wielded by his representatives (Missi) in the Roman Duchy and former Exarchate. Evidence shows also that the Popes were slow to cast off the *theoretic* dominion of the Greek emperors ; and that they long continued to admit that vested in their new protectors of the Western Empire, as extending over Italy and Rome. Adrian I dated many briefs by the years of the Byzantine « Augustus » ; others by that of the reign or patriciate of Charlemagne ; others by his own pontificate. From A. D. 800 all legal instruments drawn up in Rome continued, and for ages, to be dated by the year of the Western Emperor ; and the usage of swearing « by his safety » was throughout the same period prevalent. The successors of Charlemagne never failed, after the ceremonies of their coronation at St. Peter's, to take their seat either in that church or in the contiguous palace for administering justice at a supreme tribunal, the Pope and other high dignitaries, temporal and spiritual, Italian and Frankish, or German, usually assisting at the proceedings as imperial assessors. The highest authority in judicial causes resident at Rome, the *Praefectus Urbis*, continued to be appointed by the Emperor, and to display the eagle in his arms ; such, at least the system of civic administration till the XII century, when Alexander III took to himself the right of appointing that chief magistrate, who thence became a Papal minister. At Ravenna the Archbishop Sergius (deceased 860), as well as his successor Leo, are said by Agnellus to have *ruled* over the Exarchate and Pentapolis, as did the vice-regal Greek officers before their time. On the other hand we find unequivocal proofs that, before the end of this century, the Popes assumed the style and acted upon the right of independent princes, deputing judges and other functionaries to officiate in subject cities ; using such phrases in their briefs as « our Roman City — our Roman People » — *nostra Romana Civitas*, etc. In regard to the exact



date when their civil principedom had origin, historians have differed widely. Orsi, Cenni, and Bianchi determine it, in respect to the Roman Duchy at least, as A. D. 726, year of the revolt against the Iconoclast Emperor; Pagi and others place it in the time of Stephen II, 754, year in which Pepin signed the treaty of Pavia, after having subdued Astolphus; others, in 774, the year of Charlemagne's confirmatory donation; others determine its period so late as 796, assuming that till that date the Greek Emperors were still nominally sovereign at Rome; but a recent writer (Brunengo, *Origine della Sovranità temporale dei Papi*) sustains, with much mastery of his subject, that A. D. 754 must be determined as precise date of this monarchy's origin, assuming that, anterior to that year, the Popes had « held the sovereignty over Rome *de facto*, together with supreme authority in the Exarchate, alike exercised by them rather as Vicars of the Empire, and guardians of its rights, than in their own name ».

Gregorovius observes that if, by the end of the year 755, the Pope had actually attained dominion over Rome, « it was without the declaration of the City's final emancipation from the Greek Empire in the name of any among the contracting parties ». So late as 767, Pope Stephen IV, immediately after his election, caused the Romans to swear fealty to the Emperor, and throughout the Carlovingian period tribute was paid by Rome to those new potentates, forwarded to their palace at Pavia in the amount of 10 lbs of gold (400 sterling), 400 lbs of silver, and 40 *pallia* in some rich material, besides the half of all fines imposed by judicial sentence; whilst the imperial *Missus*, or resident ambassador at the Papal Court, had to be maintained by the Apostolic Camera.

We have other evidence in the coinage from the latter years of this century: the extant money of Leo III has on the obverse *S. Petrus*, with the monogram *Leo Pa*; on the reverse, *Carlus Ira*; in the next century that of Paschal I has, with the monogram of his name, *Scs. Petrus* and *Ludovicus Imp.*; that of Leo IV has *Hlotharis* (Lothaire) *Imp.*, the mo-

nogram of *Leo Papa*, and *Scs. Petrus*; a coin of Nicholas I (the first Pope to wear a crown) has his own monogram with *Ludowicus Imp.* and *Roma* in cruciform writing; one of Formosus has that Pope's effigy with *Formosus P.*, and on the reverse, *Vvido* (Guido) *Imp.*; and one of Sergius III (X century) gives the first example of the Papal effigy, here mitred, with omission of the reigning Emperor's name — except indeed in one other instance, and that perhaps the earliest extant, a coin of Adrian I, with the Pope's and the Apostle's name, but not that of the Emperor, though allusion to *his* authority seems intended in the legend, around a cross, *Victoria D. NN* — records that are important in as much as showing that the theory of imperial dominion over Rome was still maintained; as with like significance did the claims of Charlemagne appear indicated on the coins of Beneventum, where his name was read together with that of its Duke, his acknowledged vassal. And in another class of testimonies, the documentary, nothing could better express the idea of dominion held by the Emperor *together with* the Pope in the same States, than the formula, of date 800, given by Muratori: *Regnante Domno nostro Piissimo perpetuo et a Deo coronato Karolo Magno Imperatore, Anno Imperii ejus Primo, seu et Domno nostro Leone summo Pontifice, et universali Papa.*

Regarding the effect of this new position on other spheres, one must own that it has contributed variety of themes and some imposing details to Art; yet the noblest subjects in sculpture and painting, supplied by Papal story, are from periods anterior to this great political change. Holy Pontiffs do not appear more venerable through the trappings of regal state; nor has Raphael enhanced the moral grandeur of the scene between the first Leo and Attila by introducing the court-pomposities of Leo X. And ritual, in which Catholicism has so profoundly understood how to move the heart and exalt the religious sentiment, her unrivalled agency for affecting soul through sense — what has this really gained

in proportion to what it loses through the sceptred state of her High Priest? Magnificence, in so far as it serves to enhance the expression of spiritual realities, and to shadow forth the Infinite, cannot indeed be carried too far in a religious worship nobly and justly organized; but the etiquette of the Court and parade of the Army, with serried weapons and glittering uniforms, jar against the sanctities of the altar, intruding the lowest instead of the highest attributes of power thus served. The Papal High Mass is a gorgeous representation that (except indeed at one moment, the Elevation, beyond description sublime) fails of touching the heart, and is notoriously less attended by devotion, on the part of the multitude, than all the other more solemn celebrations at Rome; in its splendid grouping and stately but cumbrous ceremonial, suited indeed to awaken curiosity, to dazzle and astonish; but altogether too like a triumphal procession, where Heavenly Truth is chained to the car of an earthly potentate, most venerable, indeed, as St. Peter's Successor, but, as king of Rome, himself the creature of earthly circumstance. A pageant of Hierarchic Supremacy, rather than a homage to the Eternal Founder of the Church, is what the highest act of Christian worship in the great Catholic Cathedral might certainly *seem* if intent were judged by externals.

But that final act, the Benediction, raises itself above all censure, while appealing to the inmost religious sense of every heart; and the phrase « *urbi et orbi* », though not now heard in the chanted formula, answers to the world-wide import, the height of sanctified authority implied in that blessing well-called « apostolic ». Imagine any other ecclesiastical dignitary taking it upon himself to officiate thus! Would there not be a species of presumption in any to attempt *that*, the perfect propriety of which on the part of the Roman Pontiff must be felt, and surely revered by, every one among the thousands who gaze upwards, from the dense throng and serried troops that fill all space between the majestically-

curving colonnades, to that splendid group on the balcony of St Peter's? Yet how many are there in that multitude who, from Rome's point of view being heretics or schismatics, have no part in the paternal blessing! whereas, had the Papacy been satisfied with the rational acknowledgment of a high representation and fullest development of episcopal powers in itself, instead of claiming a supremacy that introduces another doctrine into the Christian creed, all believers might have been admitted into its spiritual embrace, and all heads might have bowed with equal reverence to its blessing.

Much progress was effected in religious and charitable institutions during this century. The monastic system, already in many instances on the decline, received fresh impulse and encouragement.

An interesting account of the restoration of the long-ruined and deserted Monte Cassino cloisters (718), is given by Mabillon, in the life of St. Petronax, a citizen of Brescia, who was urged by Gregory II to carry out his pious intention of re-assembling a Benedictine brotherhood on that site, and raising again the monastery laid prostrate by the Longobards, in which object Gregory himself, and afterwards Zacharias, supplied sacred books, the Scriptures, and other articles requisite, as well as the original Rule in St. Benedict's writing, with the measures for bread and wine he had adopted to regulate the daily allowance to his monks. The same Pope Gregory, after the death of his virtuous mother (well-named Honesta), converted his forefathers' mansion, in the Trastevere, into a monastery, with its church of St. Agatha. The St. Paul's cloisters, now so deserted that one writer, Palatius, describes them as *ad solitudinem reducta*, he repaired and re-peopled with monks; St. Pancrace, and another convent, St. Andrew, where was found only one religious left resident, he alike recalled to vitality. At the Lateran he placed a community to keep up worship in that basilica, day and night, with the same devotions as had been earlier appointed at St. Peter's. In munificence towards the sanctuary the



Popes of this epoch showed a truly royal spirit; and among their gifts, metallurgy, statues in gold or silver, besides embroidered and jewelled hangings, seem now the favourite forms of precious offering: thus did Adrian I alone bestow upon churches the total amount, in weight, of 1384 lbs of gold, and 1773 of silver. Carlomann, the brother of Pepin, resigned the sovereignty of Thuringia (747) to receive the monastic habit from Pope Zacharias, and retire to a mountain-solitude near the summit of that majestic Soracte that so nobly rises above the Roman Campagna, where he built an oratory and cell, now represented by a picturesque Franciscan convent on the same commanding height. Anselm (revered as a Saint) resigned the Longobard dukedom of Friuli, to make religious vows before Stephen III; and, about the year 752, founded the monastery that became illustrious among such centres of learning and charities, Nonantola, near Modena, where he built two ample hospices for strangers and pilgrims—200 to be accommodated in each; and here lived to see 1144 monks (besides novices) assembled under his rule. Other charitable institutions now received large improvement, especially at Rome, where two hospitals for pilgrims, in the vicinity of St. Peter's, were founded by Stephen III; and four other similar *xenodochia*, fallen into decline, were restored by Stephen IV, in a single one of which 100 poor used to be fed daily; while to the dependent strangers, lodged near the great basilica, as well as to the sick and poor among citizens, Zacharias ordered a daily distribution of food from the Lateran palace. In the earlier years of this century the Anglo-Saxon king, Ina, founded at Rome the church and hospice for his subjects, supported by a slight tax upon every house in his kingdom, which, annually forwarded for delivery on St. Peter's day, became known as the contribution of « Peter-pence » from England; and the immense hospital of *S. Spirito in Sassia*, created by Innocent III, now represents the establishment whose nucleus is due to the pious king Ina. It was not here, as has been stated, that the first Foundling

Hospital had its origin, a system maintained to this day within the walls of S. Spirito, but at Milan, and also in this century — originated and endowed in 785 by a priest of that diocese, who set the first example in Europe of such an asylum for exposed infants (Muratori, *Antiq. Med. Aev. diss.* 37).

Altogether, it must be owned that, with the acquisition of the good things of this world, the Popes of the period we are considering showed a noble purpose of using those enlarged means for sacred and beneficent objects.

Some of the most remarkable Longobardic monuments arose within the last period of that people's dominion in Italy — as *S. Salvatore* of Brescia, and *S. Michele* of Lucca, the latter built on the Latin-cross plan, in style partaking of the Oriental, with columns resembling the composite in order, and the whole constructed without any use of antique fragments. Beautiful and most characteristic are the leafy cornices and frieze of fantastic animals between the arcades of its front. At Bologna is seen a most curious cluster of seven churches, united and communicating, known in the aggregate as *Santo Stefano*; one, *SS. Pietro e Paolo*, being the former cathedral, with Ionic columns partly buried in the pavement, small round windows, and some resemblance to the old Norman architecture; another, the Longobard Baptistery, dodecagon, descended into by steps, with columns of veined marble supporting ponderous round arches, an open gallery above, and in the midst a marble shrine, said to be intended for a copy of the Holy Sepulchre, or (as otherwise stated) a mausoleum for the body of St. Petronius. A triangular marble pulpit here is adorned with curiously quaint reliefs of the Evangelic Symbols, the Eagle holding a book open at the text, « in principio erat Verbum ». Here, and in other of these interiors, the shafts of fine marble are relics from a temple of Isis on this site, itself (according to local tradition) converted into the original cathedral. Some Greek paintings on the walls, sadly damaged, are of an ancient school; and a

Madonna is said to be that placed here by the bishop Jocundus in 488. It is probable that no extant portion of these clustering churches is older than the VIII century, of which remains one distinct record in an epigraph, among the few at hand with the names of any Longobard kings, on a large marble vase: *Umilibus vota suscipe Domine dominorum nostrorum, Liutprante Ilprante regibus — unde hunc vas impleatur in cenam Domine salvatoris* — the allusion in the last part, as it seems, to a practice of depositing offerings, probably in coin, on Holy Thursday. Another of these churches has a double-storied colonnade, the upper of antique shafts from the Isiac temple, coupled by capitals fantastically chiselled into forms of monsters supporting narrow arches; and here the English visitor may look with interest on an ex-voto Madonna presented by some pilgrims from our country, about 1400. There is a certain romantic gloom in [this labyrinth of dim old churches; and we feel that the people who could build thus must have been possessed by a sense of the awfulness of eternal things. The dedications of the several interiors — *Santo Sepolcro, Atrio di Pilato, Crocifisso* ec. — were probably adopted soon after the Crusades, when prevailed a desire, sprung from the enthusiasm of those conflicts, to *reproduce* in imaginary imitation the holy places of Jerusalem, as if to compensate for their actual loss to Christendom — an aim most picturesquely carried out in the mountain-sanctuaries, amidst the loveliest Italian Alpine scenery, of Orta, Varallo, and Varese. Among the beautiful churches of Bologna, the S. Stefano group stands alone, like a monument to a distinct epoch in this grand old city's religious annals, which indeed ascend to very remote Christian sources; for the first church here is said to have been built A. D. 260, and ruined in the persecution under Diocletian; the next, dedicate to SS. Peter and Paul, in 364; and the third, a more stately cathedral, in 432, founded by St. Petronius, the 40th bishop and still-revered Patron of this See.

After the Longobard kingdom had fallen a change supervened in Italian Architecture, brought on by northern influences, that now began to be generally felt and evident; but the Longobardic continued long to blend with the Gothic, sometimes predominating in such union, as seen in the cathedrals of Ferrara, Modena, Cremona, Borgo S. Donnino. S. Michele of Pavia, founded in the VII century, has been cited as a genuine example of the Longobardic style; but the present church was built in the last years of the X, or first of the XI century, the former having been destroyed when the city was burned down by the Hungarians, 924; not but that the second *may* be a faithful copy of the first edifice. The victory over the Iconoclasts no doubt gave fresh impulse to, if it did not serve to elevate, religious art; and there is valuable evidence as well to the antiquity as to the public esteem for art-works still extant in Roman churches, in the letter of Adrian I to Charlemagne, where, arguing against the image-breakers, that Pope cites proof of time-honoured usage, opposed to their ideas, in the mosaics and paintings of sacred subjects at S. Maria Maggiore, St. Paul's, St. Mark's — also at SS. Apostoli, S. Lorenzo in Damaso, and another basilica, where they no longer exist; the paintings here referred to having all perished.

We must not turn away from the story of Art at this period without noticing another product of special value among the mosaics in Rome's churches: that on the apsidal vault at *S. Pudenziana*, formerly referred to the time of Adrian I. but now by general consent classed among antiquities of much earlier date; by the German archaeologists (« Beschreibung ») assigned to the VIII century, by De Rossi (« Roma Cristiana ») pronounced the first in merit among all Christian mosaics of the ancient school; and by the authors of a new Art History (Crowe and Cavalcaselle) ascribed to so early an origin as the IV century. In conception and treatment this work is indeed classic: seated on a rich throne



in the centre, is the Saviour with one arm extended, and in the other hand holding a book open at the words, *Conservator Ecclesiae Pudentianae*; laterally stand the daughters of the Senator Pudens, SS. Praxedis and Pudentiana, with leafy crowns in their hands; and at lower level, but more in front, SS. Peter and Paul with eight other male figures, all in the amply-flowing costume of ancient Romans; while in the background are seen, beyond a portico with arcades, various stately buildings, one a rotunda, another a parallel-ogram with gable-headed front, recognisable as a baptistery and basilica, here, we may believe, in authentic copy from the earliest types of the period of the first Christian Emperors. Above the group, and hovering in air, a large cross, studded with gems, surmounts the head of the Saviour, between the four symbols of the Evangelists, of which one has been entirely, and another in the greater part, sacrificed to some wretched accessories in woodwork actually allowed to conceal portions of this most interesting mosaic! As to expression, a severe solemnity is that prevailing, especially in the principal head, which *alone* is crowned with the nimbus — one among other proofs, if but negative, of high antiquity. (Entire group right of the Saviour, restored; His head much altered by modern touches; the figure of Pudentiana best preserved of all).

The only writer in Italy of this age whom fame has much honoured, Paul Warnefried, *alias* Paulus Diaconus, was a foreigner, of that Longobard people whose « *Historia* » is his chief work. Different indeed from what we now admit as deserving the name of history is his compilation of legend, mythology, anecdote, portents and marvels in the physical order, interspersed with prosaic attempts at poetry, and all put together without any sort of system or critical discernment; but still most valuable as showing how history began to be written, and the problems in the life of nations to be solved from a Christian point of view. Amidst confusion and credulity we recognise here, as indeed in the old chroniclers generally, the earnestness of a religious mind that strives to

apprehend the connexion of earthly things with the spiritual and infinite. The learned Deacon, called to the court of Charlemagne, became a preceptor and favourite of that monarch; wrote also the *Historia Miscella*, homilies, hymns — among others that for St. John's day:

Ut queant laxis resonare fibris —

from whose syllables was formed, by Guido of Arezzo, the *solfeccio* musical system: he died, a monk, at Monte Cassino, 799 (1).

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### CHRONOLOGY OF MONUMENTS.

ROME. S. Maria in Via Lata, 700 (?) rebuilt, in 1491, facade of 17th century; S. Agata (Trastevere) 715-31, S. Angelo in Pescaria (modernized 1611) 755; S. Silvestro in Capite, 755-67; S. Giovanni a Porta Latina (origin uncertain) restored, S. Maria in Cosmedin, 772-95; SS. Nereus and Achilleus, 795-800; S. Salvatore in Torrione, about 797; S. Maria in Campo Marzo, tower only antique, founded in previous century. Mosaics at S. Teodoro, at S. Maria in Cosmedin (sacristy), on vault of Sancta Sanctorum chapel; remnant of those of Lateran Triclinium (two heads) in Vatican Christian Museum. (As to this mosaic it should be observed that in the inscription *in situ*, referring to a restoration ordered by Cardinal Barberini, the words *utraque Imperii Romani Translatio* imply the theory that the figure with name, « R. Constantinus, » is the first Christian Emperor; the general intention, to represent the Papacy in like relation towards that monarch as towards Charlemagne).

(1) Einhard, « Vita Karoli »; Anastasius, Paulus Diac., Muratori, Fleury, Maimbourg, « Histoire des Iconoclastes ».

FLORENCE. Mosaic at S. Marco, from ancient St. Peter's.

BOLOGNA. S. Stefano, once the cathedral, with baptistery, both extramural.

PISTOIA. S. Paolo, façade renewed in 1263; Cathedral founded, but mostly rebuilt in 1166.

LUCCA. S. Michele in Foro, about 764; façade added towards end of XII century.

BRESCIA. S. Salvatore, about 761.

CIVIDALE. Baptistery, about 700, restored, with façade and symbolic sculptures, about end of same century; Monument to Pemmone, duke of Friuli, at S. Martino.

NEPI. Benedictine church of S. Elia, with wall-paintings by three Roman artists (between this town and Civita Castellana).

## XIII.

### The Ninth Century.

LEO III continued to occupy the Papal throne for sixteen years after the opening of a new century ; and though the Ecclesiastical States were now politically recognized , the problem still left for the historian to solve is the exact relationship, sometimes so faintly-traced in its lines of demarcation, between pontific and imperial power even at Rome, and in the provinces now under a sacerdotal sceptre. There is no doubt (says Doellinger) « that the Pope and Emperor had entered into a relationship of reciprocal dependence, each tendering to the other an oath of allegiance, or rather of attachment and respect, the Emperor receiving his rank solely by means of the coronation and anointing from the hands of the Pope, whilst the latter had need of the Emperor as a defender, in the same manner as he had formerly needed the support of the Patrician ; becoming therefore a temporal regent, as it were, under the universal imperial dominion ». Leo's successor, Stephen V (816-'17), had no sooner been elected than he required from the Roman citizens the now-customary oath of allegiance to Louis the *Débonnaire*, or « Pious », whom he soon hastened to crown at Rheims ; and subsequently the same Pope obliged his successors, by a synodal decree, to wait for the assent conveyed by imperial commissioners before proceeding to receive consecration ; notwithstanding which measure Paschal I, (817-'24) - elected after the short pontificate of Stephen — was consecrated before the arrival of the emis-



saries sent by the Emperor Louis, though anxious to excuse this irregularity, in his first communication with that sovereign, on the plea of force having been used by his too eager partisans. Still was that Emperor's name seen on Papal coins, as in the above-noticed examples; and even down to the middle of the XI century is the same usage attested in the sole extant *denarius* of Leo IX, with « *Henricus Imp. Romanorum* », on one side; « *Scs Petrus, Leo P* » on the other. The first mention of a Roman Mint, under the Papacy, occurs in the acts of a synod held at Ravenna by John VIII, in 877; and among earlier pontific coins extant, the first in which the title *dominus* is given to a Pope is one of Leo III, with the legend *D. N. Leoni Pape*.

Though Paschal I is honoured as a Saint, though he proved a liberal benefactor, a Maecenas towards Art, a restorer of churches and friend to the poor, he was exposed during life-time to grave accusations, from which he deemed it necessary to exculpate himself by oath, confirmed through like attestation from thirty-four bishops, before the imperial commissaries. On the Easter-day of 823 he crowned at St. Peter's the young Lothaire, now associated by his father Louis in the Empire; the object of that Prince's visit to Rome having been not only to obtain the now requisite sanction of power by receiving the crown, but to quell seditions among the citizens. After Lothaire's departure the peace for a time secured through his presence was again disturbed; two ecclesiastics in high office at the Papal court, the Primicerius and Nomenclator, having made themselves conspicuous by their zeal for the imperial interest, even thus early opposed with great violence by one party in Rome, those partisans of Louis were seized, subjected to the horrid process of blinding, far from uncommon in this age; and afterwards beheaded, without form of trial, in the very palace of the pontiff! Such compromising outrage against humanity in the sacred premises naturally excited unfavourable reports against the Pope, never indeed justified by proofs, and from which his oath was considered to have

cleared his reputation fully. We read, however, of one significant fact, showing how soon the kingly power had begun to alienate popular affection from St. Peter's successors — that at the funeral of Paschal I it was necessary to convey the corpse from the Lateran gate round the walls, and along the Flaminian Way, returning by the Milvian bridge (about four miles) to the Vatican, instead of passing through the City. The election of Eugenius II, a learned and holy man, (824-7), was disturbed by the appearance of an Antipope, Zinzinius, supported by an aristocratic faction — Rome's nobility thus early signalizing themselves as the antagonists or disturbers of her sacerdotal government. Lothaire interposed a second time in the object of putting down this new schism, as well as providing against such for the future; and during his stay at Rome, Eugenius passed a decree to the effect that in future Papal consecrations should take place in presence of the Emperor's emissaries; a solemn promise to observe which was exacted by the Pope from the local Clergy, together with the oath of allegiance to the now co-regnant Louis and Lothaire. The latter soon afterwards desired to investigate certain charges advanced, it seems, both against the pontific and magisterial authorities at Rome; and as in the result of this inquiry it appeared that several estates had been unjustly confiscated for the profit of the local Church, with the consent of the Popes and through means of corrupt judges, Lothaire enjoined the restitution, in which Eugenius, greatly to his honour, acquiesced, at once ordering its accomplishment. Another act creditable to this virtuous pontiff was his decree (826) that in all dioceses and parishes should be appointed school-masters to teach sciences, « liberal arts », and religious doctrines, or « catechism », which studies, however, at least the former, seem to have soon afterwards fallen into neglect, as, in 853, Leo IV deemed it necessary to revive this enactment with special provision for tuition in the Holy Scriptures and Ritual. Another just decree passed in the same Roman Council by Eugenius, was to forbid the detention of

any person by force in the cloister, except such as had been condemned by tribunals to confinement in those retreats, a now common sentence. Gregory IV, (827-44), who was taken by force from the church of SS. Cosmo and Damian (†) to be enthroned, reluctant, in the Papal chair, soon made a journey to France in the object of conciliating the Emperor Louis with his sons; but without any important result, except, indeed, the establishing more firmly, by this intervention, the noblest claims of the Pontificate as peace-maker and corrective influence among temporal princes. The precious donations of Gregory IV to Rome's basilicas form a brilliant catalogue as given by Anastasius, with particulars that serve to throw light on the church-arrangements and ritual usages of the time. Having restored *S. Maria in Trastevere*, beside which church he also built a monastery for Regular Canons, he enriched its altars ec. with ornaments of silver and gold, jewels, precious vestments, and vessels, among which are enumerated four hampers of silver (probably for offerings) weighing 413 lbs. Among his donations to Saint Mark's basilica are mentioned veils, called *de fundato minores*, for placing on the altar, others described as *de rodino* for hanging round the holy place, according to the ancient practice of concealing the rites, save at certain passages; others, *de fundato et linea*, for suspending from the arcades; and three « Alexandrine » curtains, worked with figures of lions and horses, for the principal portals. Gregory also restored the architecture of St. Peter's, and added on its premises a chamber adorned with paintings for the Popes to repose in

(†) There has been perhaps some confusion in the accounts of this and of the retreat, urged by similar motives and at a similar crisis, in the case of St. Gregory I. The latter, as seems probable, fled, not to a church, but to some remote solitude among mountains, proving his earnestness in refusing by his pains to escape from intended honours.

after the fatigues of Matins and Mass; he also built two palaces for pontific residence near the same basilica, and repaired and enlarged the Lateran palace, still the chief abode of the Popes.

Other public works carried out by this Pope were the fortifications of the now desolate Ostia, or rather, indeed, the founding of a new city upon or near the site of the ancient one, with name also new, *Gregoriopolis* — a wise precaution against the apprehended attacks of Saracens, who, after their conquest in Sicily, were beginning to infest the maritime regions of several Italian States; and with the same precautionary purpose, were now laid the foundations for a cincture of walls for the defence of the Vatican, ultimately developed into the new quarter of Rome which took its name from its finisher, Leo IV.

The election of Sergius II (844-5) is naïvely narrated by Anastasius with particulars in total contrast to the present solemn procedure of Conclave, and showing to what degree, up to this period, still prevailed the democratic element in the constitution of the Roman Church: « The principal personages among the Clergy of Rome, with all the people, having assembled in the church for the election of the Pope, and, as usual in such cases, some demanding one, others crying out for another, on a sudden, and through a singular divine disposal, all began to discourse about the piety of the arch-priest Sergius, all crying out in loud voice that *he* was worthy of the pontificate; and the question being at last settled in regard to him, the multitude returned to their homes » (1)

(1) Confronted with such testimony, the following passage, in a late publication at Rome, can hardly be read without astonishment, when one remembers that it is *under censorship* that every printed page, every advertisement and play bill can alone be made public in that City: « The desire to find in the Divine organic constitution of the Church, and still more the desire to insinuate into other



— a proceeding not, however, brought to close without opposing efforts, as a faction (it seems of the lowest class) declared in favour of another candidate, who was carried tumultuously to the Lateran palace, but soon to be ejected thence with violence by the aristocratic party, and thrown into prison, only saved from being cut into pieces by the humane exercise of the new Pope's authority. Sergius's short pontificate was overclouded by the tremendous disaster which burst over Rome in the Saracen invasion, that led to such spoliation of her two chief sanctuaries as perhaps yielded the richest booty ever secured to any marauders. The shores of the Tiber and suburbs of the City were over-run; the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul (then alike extramural), despoiled of all their moveable wealth in gold and silver, gems, and vestments; even the silver plating torn from gates, the gold incrustations from altars. In the August of 846 was it that the Saracens forced their way into the Borgo, quarter of the Vatican, but not without gallant resistance from the different northern settlers who had establishments in that suburb. Baronius ventures the confident assurance that these invaders did *not* break open the tombs of the Apostles or rifle any other graves of martyrs; and that they abstained from setting fire to either of the great basilicas we may believe on that historian's testimony to the absence of any trace showing action of flame in the olden architecture he saw still erect — as well in the quadruple colonnades of the St. Peter's of Constantine, as in those, still in their place, raised under Valentinian II, at St. Paul's (*Annal. an.* 846). But another annalist, who enters more fully into particulars, would lead us to infer that

minds, any modern ideas of popular votation, of democracy, liberty, or equality, of (representative) Chambers, and constitutional government, which certain charlatans of our time endeavour to win belief for, *these* are blasphemous absurdities. and, we may say also, nothing else than an impious prostituting of the Religion of Christ». *Memorie storiche-illustrate dei Martiri*, pag. 28.

still more sacrilegious outrage was perpetrated ; that even the most revered of shrines , St. Peter's tomb , was emptied ; that , though they could not carry away the great bronze sarcophagus , what they found in that coffin was undoubtedly thrown out and annihilated ; besides which it is stated : — « The images of Christ and the Apostles in mosaic were pierced by weapons , and an Emir's lance that struck the face of that holiest form in the mosaic-group on the apse , is said to have drawn blood from it ». Painful indeed would be the admission , whilst we contemplate that superb « confessional » amidst its crown of even burning lamps , under the high altar , that not even the dust of the Apostle can be supposed to remain at this day entombed under that pyramid of splendours ! The election of Leo IV was precipitous , owing to the fear of renewed invasion ; and one of the chief objects of this energetic Pope was to replace the incalculable losses suffered through those despoilers in holy places ; another , the defence of Rome and her churches against recurrence of such outrage. The amazing wealth of his donations to the two basilicas may enable us to estimate the then resources of the Papacy , and appreciate the capacities of a power that at every emergency can find means for evoking the riches of earth to spread their stores around its throne , as if at the bidding of enchantment ; — the 35 million francs offered to Pius IX , in form of « Peter pence » , within the lapse of but a few years , supplying recent example of such magical virtue. Replacing the objects plundered at St. Peter's , Leo ordered the Vatican high altar to be covered with laminae of gold , displaying figures (probably in enamel ) of the Saviour , SS. Peter , Paul , and Andrew , these laminae in all weighing 216 lbs. On that altar's mensa he placed a silver-gilt Crucifix , set with jacinths and diamonds ; and above it raised a ciborium resting on columns , the whole of silver , weighing 4606 lbs. The Confessional he restored to its former magnificence , now entirely plated with silver , on which surface appeared ( probably in high relief ) the Saviour seated on a throne with a crown of gems , Che-

rubim, the two chief Apostles in bust, and figures of Angels. The church's portals were again covered with silver plating, storied with sacred representations in relief; a gold Cross, 1000 lbs in weight, set with pearls and emeralds, countless chalices, vases, lamps, *coronae*, dolphins, and candelabra, all of precious metal, swelling the list of these offerings, besides 48 costly curtains, one of gold tissue set with gems and with embroidery representing St. Peter preaching at Rome, to be suspended from the arches round the presbyterium. On a golden architrave (or rood-loft?) above the high altar were placed effigies of Leo himself and Lothaire — an apparent admission of the *participated* sovereignty; and the total of this Pope's gifts to St. Peter's in silver is reported as 5,791 marks. The well-counselled undertaking, already projected, for a cincture of fortifications around St. Peter's and the Borgo, was commenced in 848, and completed by the day appointed for solemn inauguration, 27th June, 852; the indefatigable Pontiff himself superintending the works from first to last, now riding, now walking along the ground; engaging labourers from all the estates on the Campagna, from all the monasteries in the neighbourhood, to assist. The consecration of the new walls and gates must have been an impressive ceremony. All the bishops, priests, and other Clergy of the City and provinces attended the Pope in the vast procession, which passed, all walking barefoot, their heads strewn with ashes, chanting hymns and litanies round the entire circuit, whilst the Cardinal Bishops sprinkled the walls with holy water; and at each of the three gates Leo recited « with tears of emotion » an orison written by himself, the first heard being as follows: « Deus, qui Apostolo tuo Petro collatis clavibus  
« regni celestis ligandi et solvendi pontificium tradidisti;  
« concede ut intercessionis ejus auxilio, a peccatorum nostrorum  
« reorum exilium liberemur: et hanc civitatem, quam te  
« adjuvante fundavimus, fac ab ira tua in perpetuum permanere  
« securam, et de hostibus, quorum causa constructa

« est, novos et multiplicatos habere triumphos. Per Dominum  
« nostrum etc. (1) ».

Thus arose the « Leonine City », the ruins of which now form picturesque accessories behind the great aggregate of Vatican buildings, and speak to us with a voice from the Past of mediaeval Rome in the beautiful scene enjoyed from the Pincian Hill or the Pamfili Villa; the only considerable extent still entire and available being that made use of for the covered way (a work of Alexander VI as we now see it) between the palace and the castle of S. Angelo. Another attack from the Saracens being apprehended at Ostia, Leo repaired thither with an armed force, and by his presence encouraged the companies of Romans and Neapolitans, who, with others from Gaeta and Amalfi, had volunteered to assist in opposing the common foe; and in the event the Moslem ships were destroyed off that coast by a tremendous tempest from which but few escaped to land, those few to be speedily captured or put to death; several, whose lives were spared, to be sent in chains to Rome, and there employed in the works of the new fortifications. The sensation on the arrival of the Pope at Ostia is strikingly described by Anastasius: « When they (the Neapolitans) saw the holy Pontiff, they fell prostrate on the ground and devoutly kissed his feet, offering many thanks to the Divine Majesty who had deigned to send him for their consolation; and in order that they might be able more easily to subdue the sons of Belial, they entreated to receive from his sacred hands the Body of the

(1) I subjoin, translated, the last of these three prayers: « Grant, O omnipotent and merciful god, that while we call unto Thee with our whole heart, the blessed Peter, Thy Apostle, interceding for us, we may obtain indulgence from Thy compassion, and as for this city which I Thy servant Leo IV, bishop, have through Thy aid erected with new works, and called by my name *Leonine*, deign to command that it may still be inviolate, and continue for ever secure through the clemency of Thy majesty ».



Lord ; desirous to satisfy which prayer , he sang Mass in the church of S. Aurea , and afterwards gave communion to all , having gone to that church accompanied by the same Neapolitans with singing of hymns , litanies , and spiritual songs ; there remaining on his knees , he offered up a prayer to God , that , through the intercession of His Saints , the enemies of the Christians might be given up into the hands of our soldiers , over whom he pronounced that orison with tears » — a noble and affecting scene , in which , truly , whoever is a Christian might desire to have had part with those privileged communicants.

According to other writers , that disaster at sea occurred to the Saracens after their first embarkation , laden with the spoils from the basilicas , which were thus lost at the same time with almost the whole invading army. But whatever the actual circumstances , the interposition of Leo at Ostia and the discomfiture of the infidel foe before his sight are facts essentially historic , as transmitted to fame through ages yet to come , immortalized by Raphael. And the same painter's fresco , the *Incendio del Borgo* , representing what is narrated by Baronius as also a fact , A. D. 847 , the extinguishing , namely , of a conflagration in the quarter around the Vatican after the flames had already enveloped the church's portico , ascribed to the virtue of this Pontiff's blessing , is another instance of enduring honour conferred by art on the memory of Leo IV , who indeed deserved the eloquent tribute paid to his merits by Gibbon : « He was born a Roman ; the courage of the first ages of the Republic glowed in his breast and amidst the ruins of his country , he stood erect , like one of the firm and lofty columns that rear their heads above the fragments of the Roman Forum ».

Before turning away from this honoured pontificate , we must notice two coronations by Leo IV — that desired by the Emperor Lothaire , giving a crown to his son Louis at Rome , and that , in 853 , of the son of the king of Wessex , a boy then but five years old , who lived to become Alfred the Great.

A scandalous fiction, first produced by Marianus Scotus (late in the XI century), and repeated by Martinus Polonus in the XIII century introduces at this period into story a female, born at Mayence and educated at Athens, as John VIII, or « Pope Joan » (855), between Leo IV and Benedict III; but not one writer, either contemporary or near to the period in question, mentions this fable, the evidence for rejecting which is indeed the amplest we could desire.

Doellinger considers that the whole episode is interpolated even in that earliest authority for it, Scotus; and the refutation supplied in a single Papal coin of 855 dispenses with the necessity for any other: that coin bearing the names of Lothaire and Benedict III; and as Leo IV died on the 17th July, Lothaire I on the 28th September in the same year, the interval of two months and ten days leaves no time for that fictitious pontificate between the two others that belong to History (v. « History of the Church », Doellinger, vol. II, c. 3). As to be expected, the utmost has been made of this story and of its disgraceful catastrophe by which the impostor was detected, said to have happened during a procession from the Lateran, when, arrived near the Colosseum, the disguised woman gave birth to a child, and died on the public way amidst the amazement and indignation of all present. The imagined motive for avoiding that spot, because made infamous by such event, in the prescribed route of papal processions, can only have existed in the minds of those at a distance; the real one being easily understood when we remember through what heaps of ruin the ecclesiastical companies had to walk on such occasions.

Benedict III, (855-'8), elected immediately after the death of Leo, was led, as it were, by force from *S. Callisto*, the church of which he was titular (or Cardinal priest), to be enthroned reluctantly at the Lateran. But an Antipope, Anastasius, already suspended from the priesthood for misdeeds, was now supported by an imperial faction; and even within St. Peter's ensued sacrilegious outrage by act of this unworthy

Cardinal, who with his own hand struck down the images of the Saviour and the Virgin, and destroyed the picture of the Synod in which he had been justly condemned, here seen over the sacristy-door—a form of perpetuating such proceedings lately introduced in Rome.

During Benedict's short pontificate, Ethelwolf, King of England, arrived in Rome, and offered a golden crown (4lbs weight) with other presents at the Apostle's tomb, providing by testament for the annual tribute of 100 gold marcs to the Roman Church, to be divided into three equal parts, namely, for the two great basilicas, and for the Pontific largesses. The title « Vicar of St. Peter » was for the first time assumed by Benedict III, whose successors followed his example in contenting themselves with this, but from the XIII century preferred the more sublime title, « Vicars of Christ »; and as to this change of designations, we may observe the gradual assumption of the more imposing, contrasted with the greater simplicity of the earlier style adopted. The Roman Bishops whose names we read on tomb-stones in Catacombs, are simply called « episcopus »; in the V century Pope Hilary styles himself « Bishop and Servant of Christ » (*famulus Christi*), as his public works are recorded in an inscription once at the Lateran Baptistery. Gregory III is *Sanctissimus ac Beatissimus Apostolicus Papa — gratia Dei Episcopus Catholicae atque Apostolicae Urbis Romae* — on a tablet that commemorates a Council at St. Peter's; and in the famous Donation of Matilda, Gregory VII is styled *Dominus Papa Romanae Ecclesiae*. Over the throne in the apse of the Lateran, before the burning of that church in the XIV century, were read some Latin verses, of what precise date is unknown, but supposed so ancient as the V century, beginning: *Haec est Papalis sedes, et pontificalis — Praesidet et Christi de jure Vicarius iste*. (« This is the Papal and pontific seat, where he who is by right Vicar of Christ presides ») — perhaps the earliest example of the use of that loftiest designation. But up to and during the IX century, *Papa Romanus* was the term

adopted simply in order to distinguishing the Roman from other prelates alike styled « Papa ». The earliest chiselled epigraph with that title was on the marble chancel-screen once at S. Sabina : *Eugenius II Papa Romanus* ; the next in date on a similar ground at S. Clemente : *Sanctissimus Dom. Leo IV PP. Romanus*.

Nicholas I (858-'67) set another example of resistance , apparently sincere, to the proffered honours of the Papacy , for avoiding which he had concealed himself at St. Peter's during the election ; but not the less did this Roman Deacon prove one of the most energetic and virtuous occupants of that throne. The Emperor Louis , then at Rome , witnessed his consecration ; and when shortly afterwards the new Pope visited him in his camp near the walls , that sovereign set the first example of holding the stirrup and leading by the bridle, for a bow-shot's distance, the horse ridden by the Pontiff , whose feet he kissed after the latter had dismounted ; such homage from royalty thenceforth passing into a regular usage , required by the etiquette of interviews between Popes and Emperors — but , on one memorable occasion , objected to , though at last complied with , by Frederick I towards the English Pope, Adrian IV. Nicholas was engaged in various transactions of ecclesiastical policy in far countries ; and the now-recognized supremacy of Rome over the Greek as well as Latin Church is clearly manifest in his letter to the Emperor Michael III, referring to the deposition of Ignatius, and illegitimate intrusion of Photius into the Byzantine Patriarchate. « We desire (he says) that Ignatius should present himself before our Legates and the Synod , who may examine whether his deposition have been legal — finally, when all the steps taken taken shall have been signified to us , we will determine by Apostolic decree what ought to be done ». It is evident , indeed , that this letter was without effect ; and in the result arose that new schism of the East, which dates from the intrusion of Photius and has lasted ever since. One important religious event of this period is the conversion (865)



of the King and nation of the Bulgarians, that monarch's son being sent by him to Rome with an embassy bearing rich gifts and the charge to consult the Pontiff on more or less momentous religious questions, amounting to no fewer than one hundred and six, to all which Nicholas returned answer in as many articles. Bogaris, this converted king, who at his baptism took the name of Michael, had been led to embrace Christianity by no other immediate influence than that of a picture — the Last Judgment — painted by a monk from Rome, named Methodius, whom he had engaged to adorn one of his palaces with some representation of « a terrible and striking subject », meaning, apparently, some adventure of the chase, his favourite pastime. The artist-monk chose well his theme; and the effect on the mind of a Heathen, — not indeed totally ignorant of Christian doctrine, for his sister, already converted, had striven to withdraw him from error, — was such as to afford the most eloquent of apologies for the liberal spirit with which the Church has admitted Art into her service, appreciating its power, owning the relation between its aims and the higher demands of man's nature. The story of a savage converted by the sight of a Crucifix, affectingly told by Dr Newman, is a parallel example sufficient to justify the use of that symbol also, if any argument were needed on its behalf. The appeal made to Pope Nicholas by Louis and Lothaire, inviting him to interpose as peace-maker between five contending Kings, brothers and nephews, is one among many examples of the extent to which a sublime office was now recognized by Christian Europe, in and to be exercised by the Papacy. Nicholas I, of whom Alzog justly observes that he realized the « ideal and aim of the Supreme Pontificate », boldly denounced and excommunicated Lothaire II for putting away a lawful wife and uniting himself with another; soon after which the Archbishops of Cologne and Tours were deposed from their sees by the inflexible Pontiff, other prelates also severely reprimanded for having truckled to the royal caprices in favouring that divorce. Even the invasion of the

Papal States failed to induce Nicholas to yield the point on such a question of morality, alike maintained by the Holy See, in so many other instances, against the licentious demands of princes.

The effectual possession of Ravenna was not secured by the Papacy without a long struggle, for the Archbishops of that see had claimed, and to an extent exercised, the temporal dominion over the Exarchate ever since the fall of the Greek government. When Charlemagne had left Italy (774), the prelate then in occupation placed garrisons of his own troops at Bologna, Imola, and the towns of the Ferrara Duchy, asserting his right to hold and govern them. Adrian I presently sent emissaries through the Romagna provinces to require oaths of allegiance; but the Archbishop Leo drove them away by armed force from the territories still held by him. Even after the Papal sway had been submitted to, in 783, Ravenna remained under the supreme jurisdiction of the Emperor, who exercised his rights in confirming the election to its see, though included within the states nominally Papal; but not the less did Charlemagne deem it necessary to ask permission of Adrian before despoiling that historic city of various art-works to adorn his new buildings at Aix-la-Chapelle; and when, in 785, the order was given by him to expel from Ravenna certain Venetian merchants who were detected in carrying on the slave-trade, the pontific officers obeyed, as to their lawful sovereign.

Those Archbishops had formerly vindicated to themselves a spiritual independence and almost rivalry towards the Roman See; but the spectacle is now beheld of a prelate invested with that high rank at the feet of the Pope, and after repairing to Rome to meet charges of the gravest import against both his faith and morals, laying the written profession of his orthodoxy upon the cross embroidered on the Papal slippers — « in the presence of many barons and magnates (says Anastasius) placing the same document on the life-giving Cross of Christ our Lord, on his (Nicholas's) sacred sandals, as well

as on the book of the Gospels ». And thus humbly did this Archbishop submit to the sentence which obliged him to make an annual pilgrimage to Rome, unless impeded by illness, during the rest of his life, with prohibition against his ever more consecrating bishops in the Romagna province unless freely elected *by the Clergy and people*, and accepted by the Holy See — proof that even in the near Italian provinces, under its own government, the Papacy had not yet set aside the primitive constitutions of the Church.

Certain French bishops had complained that all ecclesiastical causes pertaining by right to the jurisdiction of Synods, were now brought before the Roman See, and that new claims had been founded upon certain Pontific briefs not inserted in any body of recognized canons, but only known among those recently compiled by one Isidore. Nicholas answered with an array of authorities and arguments to prove that all causes of bishops ought to be referred to his Apostolic See, in virtue of the privileges conceded by Christ, through St. Peter, to the Roman Church, mother and head of all others; and in the result these recalcitrant prelates submitted, even the energetic Hincmar of Rheims among the rest. To the Emperor Michael III (who set such examples of frantic and blasphemous folly that we can hardly suppose him to have been other than a ferocious idiot), Nicholas addressed a long and eloquent letter, full of just reproaches and grave admonitions, with the threat to excommunicate him; and in maintaining the prerogatives of the Papacy against the Greek pretensions, he here adduces the startling claim that, as not only the Roman but the Antiochian and Alexandrian churches had been founded by St. Peter, it was the inalienable right of his successors to govern those Sees, no less than the rest of Christendom, as one fold entrusted to their supreme pastoral superintendence by Christ! — what a contrasted theory to that put forth, in respect to the relations of Rome with the same great prelacies, by St. Gregory! yet, such the evolutions of thought in the Christian world, that we may be-

lieve Nicholas I to have been sincere, conscientious, no less than his saintly predecessor.

The obstinacy of Lo haire in the divorce-question was at last opposed by Nicholas with threats to deprive him of his kingdom! and most relevant to the story of religious ideas at this period is the submissive answer from that amorous Prince: « We have never contemned the commands of your Beatitude, but have always revered and accepted them with our whole heart, desiring to be subject to no other than to God, to St. Peter, to the other Saints, and to your paternal sublimity, O my father and lord! in whom, after God and his Saints, repose our hopes of salvation; and in all that you may signify to us through your legates or our own, or else by letter, we shall promptly obey » (Baronius, ann 866). Certainly if the fabric of spiritual power afterwards rose to still more imposing proportions through means of Gregory VII, the greatness of the idea therein involved, and the energy of will capable of overcoming all obstacles for its triumph, may be alike ascribed to the mind and efforts of Nicholas I. The sanctity of this Pontiff's life allows us, indeed, to give him all credit for acting from sincere conviction, with upright resolve to aim at the worthiest; for in personal character and in the systematic beneficence of his home-government, he was a second St. Gregory: he kept lists of all the infirm paupers, the crippled and blind in Rome, taking care to provide them with daily sustenance; also seeing to the poor who could work, that they might not be destitute, and ordering his charities with such excellent method, that by the end of every week all necessitous persons in the City had shared in that bountiful stream.

It was at this period that the « Decretals », called after their compiler Isidore, began to obtain credit in ecclesiastical discipline; that series of documents relating to matters of church-government, liturgy, dogma, also morals, but especially to the prerogatives of the Holy See, being attributed to the Popes from the time of St. Clement to St. Damasus; in



reality founded upon a genuine collection made by Saint Isidore of Seville, though in the more modern part spurious, and since rejected by the Church as such. Originally produced in France during this century, they may be deemed valuable as expressive of the opinions of the time; and it is observed by a modern German writer that they really changed nothing in the essence of the Church's discipline — that opinion in this sphere of interests would have made the same progress, with or without such a publication. Pope Nicholas was probably the first, among those in high places, to avail himself of these same « Decretals » and found claims or arguments on their authority.

His pontificate is also remarkable for the introduction of the rite that placed on the brow of St. Peter's successors a crown, originally encircled by a single diadem, and first assumed by this Pope; but not till the XIV century did the *triple* Tiara distinguish the sacerdotal sovereign; and in a work on the subject of this symbol, by Garampi, it is assumed that from its origin the Papal diadem was understood to imply temporal power alone. Another writer (Benzoni, « De reb. Henrici III ») reports of a « double » crown worn by Nicholas I, with the epigraph on the lower circle, « Corona Regni de manu Dei »; on the upper, « Diadema imperii de manu Petri »; but we have a valuable illustration in art where this same Pope is represented with the crown of a single circlet — probably the earliest example delineated — among the frescoes in the subterranean church of St. Clemente, where we see the translation of the body of Saint Cyrillus from St. Peter's to this church on the Coelian Hill, with a procession in which Nicholas I, crowned both with the halo of sanctity and the royal diadem, appears in what may be supposed a portrait-figure.

Another noticeable circumstance of this Pontificate is its coincidence with the close of the well-known compilation of Papal Biography by Anastasius. Such records of the Popes had been commenced in the III century, and since the time

of Gregory the Great, the Register of their acts, briefs, and other documents had been more systematically collated from the Lateran archives. Anastasius, who lived under Nicholas I and John VIII, is probably the author only of those memoirs whose subjects were his contemporaries, and merely the compiler of those referring to earlier periods; his life of Nicholas I being the best and fullest of biographies under his name, others of which, indeed, have a freshness that seems the evidence of truth.

Adrian II (869-'72) had twice refused the Pontificate, after the deaths of Leo IV and Benedict III, before being with difficulty induced to accept it when seventy-six years old. During the ceremonies of his consecration, in presence of the imperial emissaries, Rome was invaded with an armed force by Lambert, Duke of Spoleto, on whose entry a general pillage ensued without respect to churches or monasteries. That lawless leader was on the point of losing his Duchy through the displeasure of the Emperor Louis II at his conduct. The feigned submission of Lothaire in regard to the divorce won from Adrian an absolution certainly not deserved; and the hypocritical penitent was thus allowed to receive communion from the papal hands at Monte Cassino. On the suggestion of Louis, the Pontiff undertook the office of peace-maker between the rival king, Lothaire and Charles the Bald, but without any substantial success; rather, indeed, mortifying failure; and a second repulse awaited him, when, in return for his interposition on behalf of a bishop of Lyons, who had appealed to this Pope after being condemned in a Frankish Council, the same Charles, then king of Western France, answered in a haughty rebuke, concluding: « We pray you not to send similar letters any more, lest you should oblige us to receive both them and your envoys with contempt ».

John VIII (872-'82), who had been Archdeacon of the Roman Church, is accused of worldly ambition for seconding, as he did, the usurpation of the Empire by Charles the Bald, after the death of his nephew Louis II, and to the prejudice

of his elder brother, Louis, called « the Germanic ». In 875 that usurper was crowned by the Pope at Rome, where he had secured to himself a party by bribes and promises; and it has been affirmed that John conferred the Empire as a sovereign, Charles receiving it from him as a vassal — « an assertion which has no other support than a mutilated passage in the acts of a Council held at Rome in 877 » (*Art de vérifier les Dates*). « We have elected him (it is there set forth) justly, and approved him with the consent and votes of the bishops our brethren, and of the other ministers of the holy Roman See, of the illustrious Senate, of all the Roman people, and all distinguished (in the original, *togaed*) citizens » — a formula seeming to imply that the Popes could not act on such high occasions without the acquiescence both of the Roman Clergy and municipal authorities. On the solicitation of John VIII, the same Emperor soon returned into Italy, with an army, to oppose the Saracens, whose renewed incursions had almost reached the gates of Rome. At Vercelli the two potentates now met; and though the troops, led by the Emperor's nephew, were now marching against those foes, the Pope had to hasten back to his City, not without personal risk, bearing with him a jewelled gold crucifix, the offering of Charles to St. Peter's. Not receiving the succours requisite at such emergency, John VIII was obliged at last to come to terms, and to purchase peace by a tribute of 25,000 silver marcs per annum to the Saracens. Lambert, Duke of Spoleto, who had been sent by the Emperor at the head of troops to oppose the invaders, treacherously turned his arms against Italy and against Rome; and, urged by the dangers now encompassing him on every side, the Pope fled to France, where he was received with all honours by the Duke of Lombardy at Arles; from thence proceeding to hold a Council at Troyes; soon after which, he crowned Louis « the Stammerer » as King (not, it seems, as Emperor), that prince having already received the royal symbol from Hincmar of Rheims — but

another account of this transaction represents John VIII as authoritatively deciding between rival claimants to Empire ; first in favour of Louis, afterwards for Charles « the Fat », King of Suevia, who being crowned as Emperor in 881, by the same Pope, eventually became sole ruler over the realm of Charlemagne. In his journeys through France this much-tried Pontiff was twice robbed ; at Chalons of the horses of his suite ; and at another place, by his own domestics, of a silver porringer brought for his use at table ; regarding which thefts as sacrilegious, he set the example ( I believe first, in reference to such trivialities) of fulminating an excommunication against the unknown culprits.

The state of Rome before his departure, as described by chroniclers, was depressed and miserable. Lambert of Spoleto, after having devastated the environs, had entered with a large force, occupied the gates, and placed the Pope in durance, allowing none to visit him. When the Clergy and monastic orders were moving in procession to St. Peter's, the troops rushed amidst and dispersed their company with brutal violence. The Roman nobles having been forced to swear allegiance to Carlomann as Emperor, after this act Lambert, with his troops, departed ; and as soon as left at liberty, the Pontiff transported all the treasures of St. Peter's to the Lateran palace, ordered the high altar to be covered with sackcloth, and the portals barred, leaving that great church for some time without religious rites. He then embarked on the voyage to France, to remain absent for about a year — supplying one among many examples of a pontific sovereign harrassed and outraged at home, welcomed with enthusiasm abroad. It is in reference to this Pontificate that we read for the first time of a Papal fleet, now equiped for an expedition against the Saracens, and consisting of such vessels, 170 feet long, as were called by the old Greek name, in use during the wars of Belisarius, *dromones*, provided with war-machines for hurling projectiles, for grappling, and firing. At this epoch we



find recognised and established a principle, yet new in the developments of opinion, that « the Successor of St. Peter had « the right of electing and crowning the Emperor ».

Well would it have been for the reputation of John VIII had he throughout relied only on foreign aid at emergencies of danger; but his policy has left perhaps the most striking example of the moral evil resulting to spiritual from its alliance with temporal power. In 876 Naples, Salerno, and Amalfi were constrained to enter into a league, or at least a truce, with the Saracens, who had twice invaded those States, and had besieged Salerno with a force 30,000 strong. The Pope remonstrated against this measure; and, finding he could not dissolve the league, excommunicated Sergius, Duke of Naples; nor satisfied with the use of spiritual weapons, at last (it is said) determined to take the field himself, and conducted an army into the Neapolitan States (setting the first example of a Roman pontiff placed in such false and anomolous position). His success went no further than to detach Guaifer, Prince of Salerno, from the league; war ensued between that prince and Sergius; and a few days after the excommunication had been published, the Salernitans made prisoners of twenty-two Neapolitan soldiers, all beheaded by the express order of the Pope! — « milites apprehensos decollari fecit; sic enim monuerat Papa », as the chronicler Erchempert says. The Bishop recently raised by John VIII to the see of Naples, Athanasius, formed a conspiracy against the Duke, his own brother, which resulted in the overthrow of Sergius, succeeded by that mitred usurper who, now occupying his place, ordered him to be first blinded and then led prisoner to Rome, where he was left to die in captivity. And this fratricidal proceeding received not only the approval of the Pope, but reward from his treasury in the amount of 1400 *mancoſi* — a boon requested, at last, as might be expected from such iniquitous allies, the mitred Duke renewing the league with the Saracens, and inviting their chief to repair from Sicily to Naples, near which

city a quarter for settlement was assigned to his people. In still more flagrant outrage against Christian duties, Athanasius participated in the spoils, if he did not actually co-operate in the marauding expeditions of those Infidels against the Papal States, for which he was deservedly excommunicated by the Pontiff he had betrayed; and Naples itself was soon laid under interdict, as disgraced by its ferocious prelate (881). In this episode of the history of John VIII we find, indeed, some discrepancy among narrators: Giannone represents his conduct in the light most discreditable to his dignity; but Muratori supposes that it was not as a combatant, or at the head of troops, but simply as a political intervenient that he entered the Neapolitan States. At the best, the example of a Pope who could counsel the deliberate slaughter of innocent men, who had no scruple to stain his sacerdotal robes with blood for a mere interest of worldly alliance, leads us to ask whether *any* advantages secured to the Holy See by political endowment have counterbalanced the scandal against humanity, the abdication of sanctity, in a single one among those who have worn the tiara? Stephen V (885-'91) succeeded after the brief pontificates of Marinus and Adrian III; the latter of whom is said (though not with certainty) to have passed an edict against the interposition of the Emperor in the Papal election; and is known to have set the first example of assuming a new name on his elevation to the throne, not indeed followed by his immediate, though it has been so invariably by his later, successors — the sole exception, Marcellus II (1555), who continued to call himself as from his baptism. The new Pope, chosen, it is said, against his will, found the Lateran treasury quite emptied, owing to the lawless and now usually-recurring pillage of the palace (perhaps in the last more furious than in other instances) during the interregnum; and this trait of Roman manners in the IX century is indeed relevant; for it appears that not only the residence of their Sovereign and high priest, but the whole City, as well as its suburbs, were exposed to such outrages,

apparently quite beyond the power of law, and at every interval that the throne was vacant — a contingency occurring nineteen times between 816 and 898. Later was made the effort to check this periodical onset by authority of a Council held under John X, in 904, which forbade such « *scelestissima consuetudo* », alluding to its perpetration not only at the Papal palace, but throughout the City and suburbs! Under the circumstances in which Stephen V was placed, most commendable were the large charities dispensed by him, for the greater part of which he drew upon his private property, in relieving the citizens during a severe famine; and that he was « a Pontiff of rare virtue » is the just eulogium on him by Muratori.

It is worthy of note that the Emperor Louis refused to admit the validity of his election, because accomplished without the assent from imperial power; and that, in order to overcome objections, the Pope sent the act with signatures of all who had concurred in raising him to the throne, — namely, thirty bishops, all the Cardinal priests and deacons of Rome, the lower Clergy, and all the Magistracy—thus was a Roman Pontiff elected at the period we are considering.

Formosus (891-'6) is the first example of a bishop being transferred from one to another and that the highest, See, having formerly held the See of Portus (now Porto and Ostia), from which he had been deposed by John VIII, on accusations against him afterwards disproved, subsequently to be reinstated by Marinus. Mabillon regards this pontificate as origin, or at least occasion, of all the evils by which the Roman Church was afflicted, and her influences enfeebled, during the remainder of this and the next disastrous century. The election is said to have been the work of a faction Formosus had induced to espouse his interests some time previously. Luitprand (who spoke ill of so many Popes) gives him credit for religious zeal and superior attainments in theology; and certainly both wisdom and sagacity were shown by him in interposing between Charles the Simple and Eudes, rival claim-

ants for the crown of France; but his ill-counselled policy in inviting the German intervention and giving the imperial crown to Arnulph, king of that people (896), marks a fatal epoch in the relations of the Papacy to the Italian nation and to Europe. Guido, Duke of Spol-to, had been elected King of Italy by the bishops subject to him in 889, and, after sustaining armed opposition from his competitor Berengarius, alike elected King in the previous year, had been crowned by Stephen V, as Emperor of the Romans, in 891. Almost the first public act of Formosus was to crown Lambert, the youthful son of Guido, now raised by his father to participation in sovereignty. But in the same year this Pope invited Arnulph (elected King of Germany in 887) to descend the Alps with an army in order to deliver the Italian states from tyrants—namely Guido and Berangarius, whose civil wars had brought desolation to the land, and threatened the safety of Rome. The conquests of Arnulph rapidly succeeded each other in his Italian campaign; after the capture of Brescia and the horrific example of license and ferocity given by the Germans in the treatment of the citizens of Bergamo, also taken by storm, the principal Lombardic towns and the Marquises who governed them submitted without resistance to the invader (894). Arnulph did not march upon Rome till again invited by the Pope, a year later, and there encountered (what he had not foreseen) a vigorous opposition to his entrance directed by a heroic woman, widow of the recently-deceased Guido, Ageltruda, who maintained by arms the rights of her son, Lambert, and urged the defence both of the Leonine fortifications and the entire City, whilst the Pontiff was held in a species of durance by Sergius, chief of the part leagued with her.

On occasion of this siege a scene took place in the extramural church of St. Pancrace characteristic of the age's spirit, and of its devotion ever dominant even amidst crime and violence. When, contrary to expectation, it was found that resistance would be offered, Arnulph convened his officers



and soldiery in that church for counsel: all with tears promised to prove faithful and energetic in his cause; then proceeded publicly to confess their sins to the chaplains accompanying them on the march, and finally determined to observe a fast-day in preparation for the attack on Rome! How unlike anything that those walls witnessed when S. Pancrazio became a barrack and strategic point during the siege of '49! After the Leonine bastions had been taken by storm, the now fruitless resistance ceased, and the customary solemnities of an imperial ingress ensued: the Senate, the *schola* of the Greeks, the Clergy and guilds, with banners and crosses, all chanting hymns, went to meet the German at the Milvian bridge; and on the steps of St. Peter's the Pope received and embraced him, thence conducted him to the high altar, where ensued the coronation, Arnulph being now proclaimed « Imperator Augustus » by the Pontiff, who, four years previously, had given the same crown and title to Lambert. A few days after this ceremony Arnulph went in state to St. Paul's, and there received from the citizens, through their representatives, the oath of allegiance concluded in the following terms — I give the last words of its formula — « salvo honore et lege mea atque fidelitate Formosi Papae, fidelis sum » et ero omnibus diebus vitae meae Arnolfo Imperatori » — distinctly speaking for the fact that, up to this period, the Papal sovereignty, even within its own metropolis, was, in a manner, subordinate to the Imperial. Arnulph took severe measures against those adverse to his cause, and certain principal citizens were beheaded, others exiled — though indeed, in regard to this occupation of Rome and the siege previous, contradictions are found in historians; some asserting (with Luitprand) that the citizens pusillanimously admitted those strangers without resistance; others, the contrary, and also that a cruel butchery ensued, with « a thousand horrible disorders » committed by the Germans. (Maimbourg) The election of Arnulph was declared illegal by a synod held under Pope John IX; and the successor of Formosus dated his briefs: « imperante

« domino nostro Landeberto piissimo Augusto ». The latter pontiff's reign was disturbed by a phantasm Antipope, calling himself Sergius III, maintained by his faction for but a few days — the fourteenth of such schisms on record.

After a somewhat disreputable pontificate, which lasted but fifteen days, — that of Boniface VI, whom a Council at Ravenna (898) declared to have been no legitimate occupant of the See, but an intruder raised up by faction, — ensued the election of Stephen VII (896), whose disgraceful career was brought to its close by violence within fourteen months, and whose memory has become infamous through a transaction that seems to mark decline and deterioration in the sacerdotal sovereignty itself. From the first he had belonged to the party hostile to Formosus; and, eight months after that Pope's death, was ordered by him a ghastly mockery of legal procedure yet unheard of and unknown. The body of Formosus was exhumed, vested in pontific robes, carried to the Lateran palace, and set on a throne in the Council-hall, opposite to which Stephen took his seat in the midst of all the Cardinals, the Bishops of the Roman province, and regionary deacons. The living then addressed the dead Pope in accusing terms: « Why hast thou, out of ambition, usurped the Apostolic See of Rome, when thou wast already bishop of Portus? » An advocate, standing beside the corpse, answered, going through a show of defence, after which Formosus was condemned by sentence signed by all the Synod, one clause importing that none of those ordained by him could be admitted to sacred functions without re-ordination. The Papal robes were then torn off that insulted body; three of its fingers were amputated; and, to close the hideous farce, those poor remains were dragged by the feet through the City to the Tiber, into whose waters they were thrown. After the death of Stephen VII, however, that corpse was brought to land by some fishermen, to be interred with due honours at St. Peter's; legend adding that the images of Saints, in the chapel where a funeral then took place, bowed

down to greet it, attesting the sanctity of this calumniated man. Before the close of the same year an insurrection broke out at Rome, the result of which was the overthrow and imprisonment of Stephen VII, who was cast, loaded with chains, into a dungeon, and there put to death by strangling, at what precise date is not known; and if, as seems the case, this movement were excited by abhorrence of the scandalous procedure against the dead, it may class among revolutions honourable to Rome's people (1). Within less than five months ensuing, were elected three Popes, one of whom, Theodore, reversed the sentence against Formosus; and the last of whom, John IX, a Benedictine monk, showed vigour and character. This estimable pontiff (898-900), finding Rome and the Holy See (as he states in an appeal for succour to the Emperor) without revenues for support of the local Clergy or continuing the customary charities, nevertheless desired to rebuild the

(1) About ten years after his death, Sergius III. placed an epitaph over the tomb of this Pope, his tragic fate being there stated after a faint attempt at praise for his unblessed memory:

Cumque Pater multum certaret dogmate sancto  
Captus et a sede pulsus ad ima fuit;  
Carceris interea vinculis constrictus et uno  
Strangulatus nervo exiit et hominem.

In the synod of Ravenna his acts were reprobated and those of Formosus recognised. Ciaconius, in his brief notice of Stephen VII, is so disingenuous as to pass over both that scandalous process and the revolution by which he lost his throne and life; though in a note that writer makes attempt to call into question the fact so discreditable, the judgment against the dead. He does indeed mention, leaving unaccounted for, that sentence of reprobation passed at Ravenna. The whole revolting story is found in the « *Annales Bertiniani* », which Muratori supplies from a chronicler of this century (« *Rerum Ital. Script. T. II, P. I* »); and in this instance Ciaconius, publishing at Rome, shows what we may expect from historic literature « under a censorship ».

Lateran basilica, which had fallen into ruin under Stephen VII; but the workmen sent to cut timber (probably in the Appenine forests) were stopped by brigands, and had to return empty-handed. The Pontiff and the Emperor Lambert met soon at Ravenna, where the two presided over a Council of seventy-four bishops, and where, among other edicts, was passed one, by the imperial authority, that threatened severe punishment for those who should impede or molest any Roman citizen, of whatever class, desirous of appealing to the Emperor, or on his way to that supreme tribunal, a law showing how singularly blended were the two sovereignties at this period. The moral sense of this Council was expressed in another decree, reprobating and providing against such scandal as had been given in the prosecution against Formosus — that henceforth no defunct person could be cited in judgment, « seeing that the corpse of the dead cannot either answer or give satisfaction for itself! » — singular clause of enactment!

Though it is evident that clouds were gathering over Europe, and the darkest period for the Church and civilization was lowering over the social horizon, in the IX century, it may still be concluded that Rome was the centre of light and intelligence; the example set by her Clergy, and the religious practice around the throne of her Pontiff, the best in the then conditions of Christendom. Illustrious virtues were not wanting to this age; and we have seen what efforts proceeded from the Holy See, though perhaps with far from correspondent success, through means of Eugenius II and Leo IV, for the interests of education. At this time the two impulses of devotional feeling that reached about their utmost height, and found vent in the most extravagant forms, were the rage for collecting Relics and that for undertaking Pilgrimages—the latter often a species of reckless adventure, or imposture profitable to vice, prejudicial to social interests. So early as the year 744, a saintly Archbishop (St. Boniface) had written to Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, advising that a provin-



cial Synod should forbid females, especially nuns, from setting out on pilgrimage to Rome, seeing the peril incurred to their honour — « many (he states) being ruined; few remaining pure (*integræ*) »; and a law of Charlemagne forbids the wandering through the land of pedlars (*mangones*), and naked men girt with iron—probably rings or chains, assumed to act the part of sinners enduring penance and converted from guilt. In the strange excess to which was now carried the worship of the creature, relics of favourite Saints became to the popular mind the veritable palladia of cities possessing them. When Tours was besieged by the Danes (845), the body of St. Martin was borne out of the gates to meet those foes, and said to have answered the purpose in repelling them! Gregorovius concludes that the sale of dead men's bones and holy images, formed, with an occasional traffic in MS. codes, the sole commerce at this period known or undertaken among the Romans. At Constantinople image-worship was restored, mainly through influence of the Empress, mother of Michael III, with the full blaze of pomp and demonstration; a thanksgiving hymn being sung by the bishop, its author, at the inaugural rites in St. Sophia. Such notices as are at hand showing what there was of efficient and wiser agency, of discipline or high purpose in religious usages, are interesting. In a pastoral of Theodulph, bishop of Orleans, (835), it is ordered that Confession should be made once a year; that the Clergy should preach the Scriptures, if they knew their contents (!; that no law-suits or contests should be carried on during penitential seasons; that sepulture should no longer be allowed inside churches; that Masses should not be celebrated in private, but in presence of congregations. The pastoral instructions of Leo IV (Baronius, *ann.* 855). addressed to bishops for publication among their Clergy, alike forbid private Masses; order that no priest should celebrate before day-light (except at Christmas); none use chalices of wood, lead, or glass, but only silver or gold; that no other object should be placed on the altar save holy Relics, the book of Gospels,

or the pyx with the holy Eucharist in it ; that , every Sunday and festival , the parochial Clergy should expound to their flocks the Gospel or Epistle for the day ; that they should preach the *Word of God* , and not fables ; should exercise true hospitality , inviting the pilgrim , the orphan , the poor ; that at Christmas , Holy Thursday , Easter and Pentecost they should admonish the people to receive Communion ( the requirement of the Easter-communion , as alone obligatory , not being yet in force ) ; and in the last week before Lent should enjoin the duty of confession. In the symbolism of the Church at this period , we find the usage of sending blessed palms and blessed bread to princes , the former to convey the auguries of victory in a just cause ; the latter , the token of brotherhood in faith — as in primitive practice , and to this day in that of the Greek Church.

There is affecting evidence of the recognition of the soul's immortal dignity , of the love that « hopeth all things » , in the decree of a Council , held A. D. 895 ( at Tribur ) , as to the reconciliation of a murderer , and the terms of his re-admission to communion : for forty days he was to be severed from all human intercourse , fasting on bread , salt and water , bare-footed , wearing no linen ( *nise tantum femoralibus* ) , carrying no arms , never entering a church ; for the three years following , he was to observe perpetual abstinence , still without the right to bear weapons ; during each of the next four years he was to fast for the space of three Lents ; finally , in the seventh year , might be absolved. Among a barbarous , newly-converted people , we may imagine the effect , both on the guilty and on other minds , of such discipline !

In the ritual observance of these times we read of things remote indeed from what is now permitted , as the repeated celebrations at the altar by the same priest on the same day ; for , besides the three Masses of Christmas , there were several festivals when each parochial priest had to officiate three times , whilst — still more opposed to present usage — it was even left to individual feeling how often in the course of the day

the mystic sacrifice and communion might be repeated by the same celebrant. Leo III used, in the fervour of his piety, to celebrate seven or eight times within twelve hours ! Not till the latter years of the XI century was it forbidden (by Alexander III) for the same priest to say Mass more than once in the same day — Christmas excepted ; and perhaps some abuse that had lingered till the Reformation in England, might avail to account for what seems a strange mistake of Shakespeare in making Juliet go to « an evening Mass ! »

Baronius describes a stately ceremonial in the monastery on the island of Werden on the Rhine, where, in presence of Charlemagne and many grandees, Leo III performed the first solemn canonization by Papal authority, bestowing such honours, A. D. 804, at the Emperor's request, upon Swidbert, an Anglo Saxon Abbot who had had been missionary and bishop in Friesland — deceased 713, The celebration was far from resembling what the amazingly gorgeous canonization-rite has now become : after high mass by the Archbishop of Cologne, the life of Swidbert was read from the altar ; the Pope then pronounced him a true Saint ; and his remains (he had died in that monastery) were at once exhumed, a delicious perfume exhaling from them ; the Pope and Emperor made rich offerings ; and all present contributed for the costs of a splendid shrine in which to deposit those relics. But ages were to pass before the Papacy could appropriate as its exclusive right what had once pertained to the prerogatives of the Episcopacy in general ; as, in the primitive Church, all bishops might, with consent of their metropolitans, thus propose to veneration of the faithful the martyrs who had suffered within their several dioceses, having first approved the « Acts », which used to be drawn up in form, and submitted to the episcopal sanction, after which the names of those witnesses to Truth would be inscribed on the diptychs to be read, and recommended to veneration, at public worship—such the simple primitive process of canonization, as detailed by St. Augustine, and, till the X century, retained still

among the attributes of the entire Episcopacy ! The last recorded instance of this procedure by other authority than the Roman Pontiff's, was in the case of St. Gualtier of Pointoise, raised to the honours of the altar by an Archbishop of Rouen, 4453. And this gradual absorbing to itself by the Papacy of what was once deemed to enter into the apostolic functions of every bishop, is one of many notable landmarks in its career to absolute spiritual dominion.

An enlightenment superior to the spirit of the age appears in the acts of some Popes in this otherwise darkening period. Stephen V reprobated the trial by ordeal of hot iron or water, which, notwithstanding, ultimately obtained at Rome, and is said to have been practised in the basilica of St. Pancrace; for the Clergy were at last obliged to follow the stream, and by taking the ordeal under their control perhaps rendered it, generally speaking, more humane and less dangerous. Nicholas I, writing to the newly-converted Bulgarians, « commands » them to abolish the torture hitherto allowed by their laws : « Abandon and reprobate such practices ( says the enlightened pontiff ) — If any should confess himself guilty without being so in truth, because unable to endure torture, whose is the impiety but his who forces to a mendacious confession ? » — What a lesson for after ages !

Points of discipline enforced by John VIII speak favourably for a Pope otherwise far from ranking among the more estimable : he ordered that all the Cardinals should convene at least twice every month in some Roman church for the reform or renovated activities of their own body, as well as that of the lower Clergy, and also for decision of causes on the part both of 'clerical and' lay litigants; moreover that, twice every week, they should meet in the Lateran palace to consult on ecclesiastical affairs and adjudicate in causes where priests and laymen had to plead together — regulations that evince the truly Christian sense of duty to the poor, to the people, then pervading the action of high authority at



Rome; a spirit such as, to cite one individual instance, was justly eulogized in the epitaph written by Charlemagne for Adrian I, now to be read over one of the doors of S. Peter's:

Pauperibus largus, nulli pietate secundus;  
Et pro p ebe sacris pervigil in precibus.

The successors of Charlemagne were little worthy of such an ancestor, but they also conferred benefits on the people as well as on the Church in Italy: and an edict of Lothaire, A. D. 833, instituted nine public schools, at Florence, Verona, Turin, Pavia, &c. besides the several others previously in existence. The Latin Church never sanctioned such infatuate follies in image-worship as were in full career at Constantinople, where parents used actually to take the images of Saints as sponsors to their children at baptism! Mabillon tells us, indeed, of strange observances even in the West, that began to prevail in the VII century: after a church had been desecrated by robbery or other crime, it was the practice to veil its altars in sackcloth, extinguish the lights, and then remove both relics and images to lay them on the ground in some place overgrown by thorns and brambles — but this the General Council of Lyons, in 1274, condemned as reprehensible. Wooden figures of Saints were probably first introduced into churches in the IX century; and about the same time, at least not later than the century following, began the practice of painting and dressing them for festivals — a manifest revival of the shows of Paganism, in which, as well as in the ex-votos hung beside such figures or above altars to this day, the usages of Italian Catholicism are the exact reflection of those described in Horace's Odes or Ovid's «Fasti». More interesting is the appearance of the Crucifix, that perfected and most affecting form of Christian symbolism, whose first introduction has been referred to the VII century; its more general admission into the sanctuary, to the time of Leo III. The sole example of this subject

found in the Catacombs, a painting (Bottari, Tav. 492), cannot be supposed earlier than about the close of the VII century; and the first mention of a painted Crucifix seen in a church (at Narbonne) is by Gregory of Tours, writing about A. D. 593; a representation of the subject in relief, probably metallic, being also alluded to in the verse of Venantius Fortunatus (about 560):

Crux benedicta nitet Dominus qua carne pependit.

(Carm. lib. II, 3)

The art-treatment of this subject advanced by slow gradation; and not from earlier date than the beginning of the VI century. At first appeared, in place of the simple cross, the Lamb carrying that instrument of death; next, the lamb couchant at the midst of a cross; next, the bust of the Redeemer, with radiant head, without any expression of pain, at the summit and at the foot of a cross; or (as in the mosaic at *S. Stefano Rotondo*, and on a reliquary at Monza) hovering *above* a cross that is either gemmed or flowery; in that reliquary, presented to Theodolinda by St. Gregory, being also seen the two thieves crucified, the Sun and Moon personified, and the Sepulchre, with the Angel and the two Maries. Later appeared the cross of metal with the figure incised in outline; or that of wood with the figure painted on its flat surface. The earliest *extant* painting of the subject is a miniature in a Syrian Evangelarium, date 586, in the Laurentian Library at Florence, — the treatment rude almost to the extent of the grotesque; the figure on the Cross clad in a purple tunic, the thieves also seen on their crosses, nearly naked; the mother and the soldiers, the latter casting lots for the garment, among the several other figures introduced.

The earliest mosaic treatment on record—no longer extant—is that ordered, with other such art-works, by John VII for St. Peter's, 706. For ages after the general admission of this

most sacred among symbols, reverential feeling prescribed the absolute avoidance of every indication of suffering, and, till the XI century, neither death nor agony was represented in the form of the Divine Victim; the earliest example where He is seen dead on the cross being in another MS. code, date about 1059. I believe that the most ancient Crucifixion — as a scene in painting — in any Italian church, is that in the series of frescoes around the walls of St. Urbano, the consecrated mausoleum, classic in origin, above the valley of Egeria — those art-works dating 404, according to the inscription, *Bonizo fet A. X. R. I. (anno Christi) MXI*. The oldest extant specimens in bronze, of which there are several at the Vatican and in the Mediaeval Museum of Florence, betray the lowest degradation, — an art whose incapacity almost caricatures this awful subject, — perhaps in no instances referrible to origin higher than the X century. No exact date can be determined for the *general* use of this symbol in the sanctuary; but we may conclude that, after the Byzantine Council of A. D. 692 had enjoined historic instead of symbolic treatment of sacred subjects in art, the images of the Crucified began to multiply, till at last considered the indispensable accessory of every Catholic altar, as prescribed, not indeed before modern time, by Benedict XIV, 1754. The earlier familiarity with this symbol in the Greek Church is evident from the fact that it was the public destruction of a Crucifix, hung over the gate of the imperial palace at Constantinople, which led to the first popular outbreak and shedding of blood in the Iconoclast movement. Few of the Crucifixes still seen in Italian churches can be supposed more ancient than the XIV century, except in some rare and curious examples, as that which is said to have bowed its head to St. Giovanni Gualberto, (about 1020), at the abbey-church of S. Miniato, — painted on cloth stretched upon a wooden cross, and now over the high altar of S. Trinita, the church of the Vallombrosans in Florence; that in the Dominican church at Naples, said to have *spoken* in approval to

St. Thomas Aquinas; and that at Lucca, a large wooden figure, fully dressed, ascribed by legend to the workmanship of Nicodemus, and which used to be sworn by in the oath, a favourite one with our Plantagenet kings: « by the Saint Vult (*Volto*) of Lucca! »

From the XIII century the subject begins to appear in art of higher character; though it is observable that we never see the Crucifix in any *earliest* representations of altars or rites, in picture or mosaic. In renovated art it is first seen with grouping in the reliefs by Niccolò Pisano (1260-1267) on the marble pulpits at Pisa and Siena. A picture by Berlinghieri of Lucca (about 1235), in the Florence Academy, presents it in style so grotesque as to be revolting; and neither Cimabue nor Giotto prove by any means equal to the tragic grandeur of this theme, as apparent in the earliest paintings of it by known masters in Florentine churches: S. Croce, Santa Maria Novella, S. Marco, Ognissanti.

In the Siena cathedral is still seen the Crucifix said to have been carried before the troops at the battle of Montaperti, 1260. The *dress*ing of the figure in a tunic, with or without sleeves, and the detail of a curious head-dress, like a tiara, seen in some bronzes, may be considered evidences of antiquity in whatever treatment of this subject.

Most valuable among earlier examples extant at Rome, is the Crucifixion in relief on the ivory diptych (Vatican Christian Museum), of date 888, presented by Agiltruda, wife of Guido and mother of Lambert, both Emperors, to the monastery of Rambona, founded by herself in the Spoleto province. Here, in mystic treatment, we see the Sun and Moon, above the Cross, as Genii holding torches, accessories henceforth frequently introduced in this scene, and believed to signify the Divine and Human Nature in Christ, the one radiant through its own, the other through reflected light; also, below the Cross, Romulus and Remus suckled by the wolf, an extraordinary association, probably — for this seems best conjecture — intended to allude to the victory won by the



Saviour, through His Passion, over all nations, the ancient world in fact, thus represented by the Empire in its traditional origin; a sublime sense farther carried out in the figure of an Angel, flying with a palm and flaming torch, symbols of the light and triumph of the Gospel; the other subjects in these ivory reliefs, besides the Madonna and Child, being explained in an inscription to the effect: « In honour of the « Confessors of the Lord, SS. Gregory, Sylvester, and Flavianus, given to the monastery of Rambona, which I Agiltruda founded: I Odelricus, servant of the Lord and Abbot, ordered to be sculptured in the Lord. Amen » (see Buonarotti, *Vetri antichi*).

Agiltruda and her sponse were, indeed, benefactors in their devoutness. In 881 was born their son Lambert, the future emperor; and the mother having received hospitality in those trying circumstances, being taken ill on a journey, at a *cella* (or hospice) belonging to the monastery of St. Vincent near Capua, Guido, at his grateful lady's request, presented to the Abbot a church with lands and tenants attached, besides the weight in pure gold of his new-born child. The idea of an expiatory virtue in such gifts to monasteries or cathedrals had now risen to perhaps its climax, as naïvely expressed in the formula of a donation by Charles Martel: *ad abluenda peccata sua donat monasterio*; and almost amusingly so in the picture at the S. Lorenzo basilica (near Rome) of the contest between Angels and Demons for the soul of the Emperor Henry II. finally decided for his eternal salvation through production of a golden chalice, his gift to another church of St. Laurence! Whatever the germ of abuse or delusion in all this, not the less does it testify to the deserts of the institutions so much in credit; for had the monastery been other than a centre of beneficence and edifying example, never certainly could such a glorifying mist have invested it, or have so magnified the worth of what was done for its interests.

It seems to have been the intent of Charlemagne not only to confer political powers on the Papacy, but, within certain

limits, on the prelatie body in general. Soon after his coronation he conferred on bishops and abbots possessions and privileges the list of which includes provinces, towns, villas, estates, customs, the right of coinage, and command of troops. The Abbot of Monte Cassino was created Arch-chancellor of the Empire, Chief Chaplain and « *custos* » of the imperial palace, all his monks becoming at the same time palatine chaplains; he was entitled to drink out of gold, to have his bed covered with purple, to have the imperial Labarum, or a gold cross studded with gems, borne before him in processions. The wealth of that monastery, acquired soon after its restoration, may be inferred from its losses through the Saracens, in the IX century, who in four successive incursions despoiled it to the amount of 130 lbs weight, besides 3000 gold solidi in value, of gold vessels, 875 lbs weight of silver, and 19.300 gold solidi in coin (1). Charlemagne did not consider that, through his generosity towards prelates, he was creating for them a position which, from the high point of view of the primitive Church, involved dereliction from their special vocation, compromise to their essential character as Vicars of Christ (2). The rapid decline of monastic prosperity and observance was followed by restoration almost as rapid. Most of the great cloisters had been devastated by invaders, or deserted by the monks, many of whom rebelled against

(1) The actual value of the gold solidus is given above as estimated by Cantu; but others make it only 9 fr. 28 c. in the actual, in the *relative* value so high as 99 fr. 53 c. (Thierry « *Temps Mérovingiens* »).

(2) Nothing could be stronger than the manner in which fathers of the Church expressed themselves before there was any object of serving an ecclesiastical government, instead of simply sustaining a religious principle: *ut qui in Ecclesia Domini ordinatione clerica promoventur, in nulli ab administratione divina avocentur, nec molestiis et negotiis secularibus alligentur — ab altare et sacrificiis non recedant, sed die ac nocte coelestibus rebus et spiritualibus serviant — ne quis sacerdos et ministros Dei, altari eius et ecclesiae vacantes, ad saeculares molestias devocet*. S. Cyprian. Ep. IX.

their superiors, and demanded separate emolument from them; some (says Muratori) « fell into worse courses than did the laity ». A Roman Council, in 721, found it requisite to anathematize the marriages of nuns! But the other side of the picture shows these institutions, after temporary enfeeblement, still able to recover their worthier life. There is perhaps no passage in the old monastic chronicles more beautiful than that, in the words of a monk who began to write about the year 1050, describing the observance at Novalesa (the cloisters founded 739, in which Charlemagne once spent a Lenten season) — so calm and pure that life in its even flow of devotions and duties, where « Charity flourished beside Chastity; the bestowal of alms, and assiduous prayer for the living and the dead were continual ». From those premises, in the day of their prosperity, used to issue in harvest-time the *plaustrum dominicale*, a great car surmounted by a pole with a bell hung to it, sent forth to muster and herald on their return the waggons, sometimes several hundreds, driven back at evening through the Alpine vallies, laden with corn and wine, to that religious home under Mount Cenis. And the chronicler says that, at the fairs of that neighbourhood, traffic did not generally begin till the *plaustrum* from Novalesa had been seen to pass. In the VIII century occurred cases, in later times much more frequent, of the assuming of the monastic habit when life was in danger; and those who had been induced to this act were considered bound, in the event of recovery, to remain in that state, thus being formed a class in the cloisters known as *monachi ad succurrendum*.

The increasing reliance on the intercession of Saints now becomes more and more apparent among the features of religious life, attested by Art in mosaics and images, and with still less reticence in a poem describing the siege of Paris by the Normans, A. D. 886; the author, Abbo, a monk and deacon of that diocese, writing of things he had seen — how, at that crisis, all citizens, males and females, flocked to the

tomb of St. Germanus, invoking *him*, relying upon *him* for deliverance :

Tunc trepidant cives, cunctique vocant celebrandum  
Germanum : Miserere tuis, Germane, misellis !

And this direction of piety, however mistaken, no doubt served its purpose in the culture of the immortal being. The worship of Saints, unknown to the primitive Church, may be considered a consequence of the belief in the Incarnation. Such enthusiastic reverence for the Divine in Man may have been over-ruled for more of spiritual good than some are disposed to allow, and was at least excusable even in its excess as the error of the judgment, not of the conscience or heart. Who can say what pure and strengthening influences may not have sprung from that extatic regard for bright examples of saintly heroism, devotedness and love, the living reflex of the Redeemer's perfectness, through which alone, to many in their ignorance, that Original might be intelligible? Utterly to forget those heroes and heroines of the Cross is grievous error on the opposite side; and the Latin Church, accepting so much, has paid tribute to modern intelligence in abandoning many claims that vanish before historic light — as St. George and the Dragon, and the giant St. Christopher; no longer even asserting, if implying, that a St. Veronica ever lived. Whatever remains admissible, there is rational sentiment in the desire :

Ah ! if the old idolatry be spurned,  
Let not your radiant shapes desert the land !  
Her adoration was not your demand ;  
The fond heart proffered it — the servile heart.

In the revival of Italian architecture from the Carlovingian period — best exemplified at Rome by S. Maria in Cosmedin, S. Prassede, S. Maria in Domnica, SS. Nereo ed Achilleo,



SS. Quattro Coronati, and in the towers of S. Silvestro, S. Maria Nova, S. Cecilia, S. Michele in Sassia, the last said to have been founded, by Leo IV, especially for funeral Masses for the souls of those who fell in the defence against the Saracens — its beautiful tower and cornices the sole portion now left of the ninth-century building — in this new style we see the tendency to admit more varied and fantastic ornament: terra cotta cornices and corbels, inlaid work of coloured marble or earthenware, on the dusky surfaces of those quadrate towers; small arcades, with marble colonnettes, low porticoes or porches with heavy columns, mosaic friezes, and profuse decoration in the same art on the interior walls. Instead of the classic capital a barbaric variation, sometimes in form a simple cube, takes its place at the summit of the shaft; and instead of the wooden roofing with horizontal coffers or slanting beams, stone vaulting begins to be carried over the subordinate, though not yet over the principal, compartments — as in chapels at S. Prassede and S. Benedetto in Piscinula, and in the aisles of the SS. Quattro. The *campanili*, divided into stories of arcade-windows with terra cotta string-courses between, continued to multiply in Rome from the VIII to the XIII century; and are now indeed the sole structures, besides the picturesquely ruinous walls of the Leonine city, that remind us of mediæval Christianity at this centre, at least in the view of the City from high places. Such features as distinguish the public works of this period announce, indeed, a departure from the simpler type of the primitive basilica; but we may hail the innovation as proof, at all events, of life and progress, of Art's correspondence with the age's impulse and feeling.

Among churches of this epoch the SS. Quattro Coronati is one of the most interesting. In several features still of the IX, though in the greater part and entire renewed plan of the XII century, it has the unique detail of a *double* atrium, or fore court, besides a double portico with antique colonnades; and the remnant, advancing into those outer

premises, of three files of pillars, one built up into the convent-wall, with classic capitals in some instances mutilated to fit them to their shafts, presents proof that the church rebuilt by Leo IV must have had four, instead of, as now, but two aisles flanking its nave, and must have extended far beyond the limits of the present. Here also we see the upper gallery for females, according to primitive church-arrangement, preserved in no other Roman examples except the extramural S. Agnese and S. Lorenzo, and adding much to gracefulness of effect.

The vaulted corridor, behind the modern tribune, is undoubtedly of the IX century. Altered as this church is through the restorations ordered by Paschal I, A. D. VIII, after the injuries caused by the conflagration in 1084, it still preserves a character in which the spirit of Antiquity speaks with its own eloquence. Those « four Crowned Ones », to whom it is dedicate, are said to have been sculptors, who suffered under Diocletian for refusing to exercise their art in the service of idolatry: iron crowns, set with spikes at the inside, were forced upon their heads, and under this torture they were put to death by scourging with *plumbata*, or chains with leaden balls at the end; their names being unknown at the time this church was founded (in the VII century), but afterwards brought to light in a long-lost inscription — Severinus, Carpophorus, Severus, and Victorinus.

The Basilica dedicated to S. Praxedis, daughter of the Christian senator Pudens, and said to be on the site of her house, has succeeded to another of primitive and almost unknown antiquity, existent at least as early as 499, under which date it is mentioned in the acts of a council — the sole reliable notice of it. In the ninth century that antique edifice was destroyed by Paschal I, who raised the actual church, on different site, but with the former dedication. A liberal patron of the arts and promoter of public works, this Pope seems to have particularly encouraged the mosaicist's labours; and in three of Rome's ancient churches are

seen examples of their art dating from his pontificate — S. Cecilia, S. Maria in Domnica, and S. Prassede, — in each of which appears the figure of Paschal in the mosaic groups, distinguished by a *square nimbus*, — sign of his being still among the living. As to style all these coloured compositions present, indeed, unmistakable evidences of advancing decline in art; but those at S. Prassede possess a certain religious grandeur that strikes the imagination. From the ninth to the fourteenth century, it seems, that building stood with its main features unaltered; but, like many other churches, fell into decay during the papal residence at Avignon; and was restored, about the middle of the XV century, by the architect Rossellini, under Nicholas V; unfortunately subjected also to other restorations of a later, and (as to the arts) much worse period, by order of its cardinal titular. The ancient windows were walled up, and larger ones, unsightly indeed, opened in their stead. Still less in accordance with the antique, are later novelties introduced in 1730; also the frescoes, of the same century, on the attic-walls, illustrating the story of the Passion. As to the exterior, the only details that can be referred to Pope Paschal's church are the cornices of terra-cotta mensolae, the heavy quadrangular tower, the porch, a good construction, with high-hung arch resting on two massive Ionic columns; besides the rounded windows, arched above with large tiles, still traceable though filled up. The general aspect of the interior is sombre and chilling; even the harmonies of melancholy effect are impaired by the intrusion of modern art utterly uninteresting and commonplace. In the colonnades several of the granite shafts have been built up within heavy square pilasters, but sixteen of those ancient columns are left visible; their rudely-chiselled Corinthian capitals adorned with sculptures of birds, the eagle, cock, and dove, in high relief against the abaci. Peculiar is the division of the nave into compartments by four great arches that spring from flat pilasters almost to the ceiling, which is of wood-work in coffer.

The mosaics of the IX century, on the apse and above both the inner and outer archway of the choir, retain all their olden characteristics, though not without damage through a renovation attempted in 1832. Above the triumphal arch is the heavenly Jerusalem, encircled by golden walls studded with gems, within which mystic inclosure stands the Saviour with globe and cross, between two Archangels; while the gates are guarded by other angels in white vestments; and, approaching on either side, are numerous groups with crowns in their hands; two figures, nearest the gates, recognizable as SS. Peter and Paul, between whom stands another white-robed angel. Lower, in formally-disposed groups on each side, are other companies offering leafy crowns or waving palms, as on their way to the beatific city. But we have to deplore the Vandalism that has in part sacrificed both these groups in order to the opening of tabernacles for relics; and, still more unpardonable, the intrusion of a baldachino over the high altar, which obstructs the view of that mosaic-clothed sanctuary. On the apse is the principal mosaic group, colossal and imposing, however inferior in technical execution: at the centre, standing amidst bright clouds at higher level than the other figures, appears the Saviour, in gold-woven vestments, with cruciform halo, the right arm raised, the left hand holding a scroll; above Him, issuing from the clouds, a hand stretched forth to place on his head a golden diadem set with a single gem; laterally, on lower level, SS. Peter and Paul, presenting to the Saviour two young and magnificently-dressed females, Praxedis and Pudentiana, both wearing diadems and offering crowns, their costume probably that of noble Roman ladies in the ninth century; beyond, at one side, Paschal I., with a model of his church; at the other, a young ecclesiastic holding a richly-bound volume—probably St. Zeno. The Jordan flows at the feet of these figures; and palms, on one of which stands the phoenix — symbol of the Resurrection — terminate the composition at each end. Above the archivolt appears the Divine Lamb seated, amidst seven



lighted candelabra, on a jewelled throne beneath the cross ; also Angels and the winged symbols of the Evangelists , each with a bound volume ; and below , the four-and-twenty elders offering their crowns in adoration. On a frieze under the group in the apse , is again introduced the Lamb accompanied by twelve sheep that proceed from the mystic cities, Jerusalem and Bethlehem ; and underneath, in gilt letters, we read verses recording the constructions and the piety of Pope Paschal. In this mosaic the artistic character is reflected from antiquity , — the massive draperies , the quiet dignity and general formality reminding of sculptured relief. Most interesting in this church's interior is the much-frequented chapel of the « Holy Column , » whose walls and vault are entirely encrusted with marbles and mosaics on gold ground — all of the ninth century ; and the effect of which , in the dim light, has a mysterious splendour that inspires awe. From its profuse magnificence it was once called the « Garden of Paradise ; » was originally dedicated to St. Zeno ; afterwards to the Virgin under the invocation , « *Libera nos a poenis inferi* ; » and finally to the column, which , we are told in an inscription here read, was brought from Palestine to Rome under Honorius III. , A. D. 1223. The upper parts of the walls, as well as the vault, are covered with those antique mosaics on whose golden ground the figures stand out in solemn distinctness : SS. Peter and Paul before a throne , on which is the cross, but no seated figure ; the former Apostle holding a single gold key (1) , the latter a scroll ; St. John the Evangelist , with a richly-bound volume ; SS. James and Andrew, the two daughters of Pudens and S. Agnes, all in rich vestments, and holding crowns ; the Virgin Mary (a veiled matronly figure) , and S. John the Baptist standing beside her ; under the arch of a window , another half-figure of Mary, with three other females , all

(1) Ciampini gives an engraving of this figure without the key ; a detail, therefore , to be ascribed to restorers ; — surely neither justifiable nor judicious.

having the nimbus, one crowned, one with a square halo to indicate a person still living; above these, the Divine Lamb on a hill, from which the four rivers issue, with stags drinking of their waters; above the altar, the Saviour, between four other saints, — figures in part barbarously sacrificed to a modern tabernacle that conceals them. On the vault a colossal half-figure of the Saviour, youthful but severe in aspect, with cruciform nimbus, appears in a large circular halo supported by four Archangels, solemn forms in long white vestments, that stand finely distinct in the dim light. Within a niche over the altar is another mosaic of the Virgin and Child with the two daughters of Pudens, in which Rumohr (*Italienische Forsch.*) observes ruder execution, indicating origin later than the ninth century. The entrance to this chapel is flanked by two columns of rare black and white granite, supporting a beautifully chiselled marble entablature, above which, round a high-arched window, are carried two tiers of mosaic heads in circlets: the Saviour and the twelve Apostles on the outer, the Virgin Mary between SS. Stephen and Laurence, besides eight female saints (all either crowned or veiled) on the inner; above, near the angles, two aged heads, supposed to be S. Pudens and S. Pastor. In architecture this chapel is well worth studying. Its groined vault springs from four granite columns at the angles, with unequal shafts and gilt Corinthian capitals, each supporting a cube-formed architrave and massive marble cornice; the transition before the final disappearance of those members, after both had become useless to the constructive whole, being here observable. On the pavement of fine intarsio is an immense disk of porphyry, said to mark the spot where Paschal I deposited the bodies of forty martyrs, transferred from catacombs; and this interior is deemed so sacred that, through one of those strange ecclesiastical arrangements that seem to have no accord with Christian ideas, females are never allowed to enter except on the Sundays in Lent! As to that relic whence it takes its now popular name, the legend is the following: —

Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, titular of this church, sent as legate of the Crusade to Syria, A.D. 1223, having one day left the camp for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, fell into the hands of the Saracens, who cruelly tortured him, and were about to saw his body asunder, but were deterred by a miraculous appearance: the countenance of the victim becoming radiant with celestial light, whose beams dazzled and terrified. In awe and reverence, their captive was not only released, but received from his tormentors a precious donation, — the column (or rather its lower portion only) to which the Saviour was bound for scourging. Some writers, indeed, state that the cardinal obtained this relic among the concessions stipulated for by the Crusaders, on the taking of Damietta; and of the miraculous additions to this tale none are given in the learned work by Padre Davanzati, « *Storia di Santa Prassede* ». At all events, since the return of Cardinal Colonna from the Crusade, here the column has remained, seen by a lamp perpetually burning before it, in a niche encrusted with precious marbles: being three palms in height, of syenite granite, distinguished by vivid black stains on a white ground — hence the term adopted by Italian mineralogists, *granito della Colonna*, for this species.

Below the high altar of this basilica we descend into a dark crypt, consisting of three corridors, that once communicated with more extensive subterraneans, passing (it is said) under the entire area of the edifice, but closed some century ago; that part still accessible having a ceiling in one corridor arched, in the others flat; the whole incrustated with large marble slabs. Near the entrance stand two great sarcophagi, one containing the bodies of SS. Praxedis and Pudenciana; each adorned with a frieze of coloured intarsio, and one with some early Christian sculptures. An altar in this crypt, said to be the identical one consecrated in the house of Praxedis, presents a beautiful example of Mediaeval

intarsio, in circles, triangles, bands, &c. (1); a fresco above serving as an altar-piece, which Italian critics refer to the twelfth, others to the eleventh century, representing the Madonna between the two Daughters of Pudens, who both wear and hold in their hands the crown, alike the sign and the offering of sanctity; the countenances delicately marked and sweetly expressive, the costumes gorgeous with profuse jewelry and embroideries that remind of the Byzantine.

The campanile, a square brick tower, which may be ascended by a rickety wooden staircase, seems in incipient ruin—a ghost-like and melancholy place where one might fancy oneself in some decayed abbey far from all busier haunts of men; its arched windows built up so as to conceal the marble tracery now only visible from within, and its walls retaining faint traces of almost obliterated frescoes in mere outlines of figures and nimbus-crowned heads, from which colour has completely faded. The masonry is rude and irregular; and it is probable both the building itself and those all-but-lost paintings belong to the ninth century.

The Monastery of S. Prassede was founded by the same Pope Paschal I, and first occupied by Basilian, but since 1198 by Vallombrosan monks. In its interior that pontiff erected a chapel to S. Agnes, with mosaic-adorned walls, of which remains not a trace; and an inscription still extant states that the cloisters were built by a cardinal titular in the time of Gregory VII.; but in the architecture now before us, a quadrangle of arcades with square pilasters, is no detail stamped with the character of the eleventh century.

S. Maria in Domnica, built by the same Pope, is a perfect example (notwithstanding the renovation ordered by the Cardinal who became Leo X) of the basilica type as resus-

(1) If for the building of the present a new site was indeed chosen and the primitive church entirely demolished, this tradition must of course fall to the ground.



citated in the IX century : without transepts, it has aisles divided by colonnades supporting narrow arches, an isolated high altar, confessional below, and ample hemicycle beyond. The mosaic on the vault of the apse is indeed expressive of the devotional feeling of Pope Paschal's time, as here the Blessed Virgin seems the veritable Heroine and object of worship amidst a sacred group. Surrounded by numerous companies of Angels in long white robes, who reverentially approach as towards their Queen, she is seated, clothed in purple and gold, on a lofty throne with the Child, also richly clad, on her knees, whilst the Pope (no doubt a portrait of Paschal I) in sacerdotal vestments, kneels to kiss her foot. On the attic above is seen the Saviour within an elliptic nimbus, attended by the twelve Apostles, each holding a book with jewelled cover; the costume of this entire group being strictly classic, with the long-flowing white draperies of ancient Roman use (1). The Madonna appears of advanced age, her aspect distinguished by severe and ascetic gravity, most unlike the Virgin Mother in later Art.

S. Cecilia in Trastevere, on the site of that Martyr's house, was consecrated by St. Urban soon after the discovery in the Catacombs of her remains, now transferred to the high altar of this church. A tasteless renovation effected at the period (1725) when style was worst in every walk, has deprived its interior of all pertaining to the IX century, with sole exception of the mosaics in the tribune and a curious remnant of the paintings once in the atrium.

But the exterior still retains the fine old campanile of brickwork in stories of arcade windows, with colonnettes, di-

(1) It is probable that, even in the IX century, the more aristocratic costume in Rome was a good deal like that of antiquity; as we are told by Eginhard that Charlemagne would never lay aside his Frankish dress, linen vest with trousers, blue mantle, boots, sword and girdle, except in Rome, where, at the request of the Pope, he assumed the long tunic, chlamys, and buskins; on high occasions, the robe of gold tissue and golden diadem.

vided by string-courses of terra-cotta moulding, a venerably conspicuous object amidst the narrow gloomy streets of Trastevere; also, the atrium with its colonnade of unequal granite shafts, Ionic capitals, and frieze inlaid with rich mosaic-work of arabesque design alternating between small medallion heads that correspond to the pillars below, and represent St. Cecilia, other saints of her house, and two Popes, probably SS. Urban and Lucius, both with the mitre — here seen in perhaps the earliest art-presentment, at least in Rome. The mosaics on the apse are in general composition similar, but as to treatment inferior, to those at S. Prassede — indeed almost barbaric, though not without a sort of spectral dignity: the central figure of the Saviour being attended, as usual, by the two chief Apostles and four other Saints, namely, Paschal with the model of his church, Cecilia, Valerian her husband, and another female, probably St. Agatha, to whom, as well as to St. Cecilia, was dedicated the adjoining convent built by the same founder, Paschal I. On the wall at the extremity of one aisle, is the antique fresco representing the dream in which St. Cecilia is said to have appeared to that Pontiff, whilst he slept on his throne during office in the early morning at St. Peter's, to indicate to him the spot where she, her husband, and brother-in-law lay buried in the Callixtan Catacombs; the Saint being represented in rich dress adorned with rows of gems, and standing immediately before the slumberer, who is pontifically vested, with a low mitre on his head (1).

(1) The date may be uncertain; but it is to be assumed that we have here one of the earliest pictures in which the pontific vestments and mitre are seen as at this day worn — except perhaps the observable examples at S. Clemente. Baronius gives (*anno 824*) the interesting document from the Vatican archives, written by Pope Paschal himself, describing the vision of St. Cecilia whilst he slept in his chair at St. Peter's, yielding, as he owns, to the infirmity of the flesh in this distraction from devotions; his mind having been previously occupied with the idea of searching for those relics, while

The basilica of St. Mark, founded 336, was rebuilt by Gregory IV, who had been its Cardinal Titular, perhaps to satisfy the newly-stimulated devotion towards that Apostle after the transfer of his remains to Venice — though it was to the Pope so named that this church had been dedicated. Its mosaics now alone represent the earlier edifice; a splendid renovation, under Paul II, having substituted a church of the XV for that of the IX century. On its apse we still see that art-decoration, in which most remarkable is the evidence of

he questioned within himself whether the report could be true that Astolphus had stolen them during the Longobardic siege. Conformably with the mysterious intimation, he searched for, and found the bodies of Cecilia, Valerian, and Tiburtius (her husband and brother-in-law), besides those of the Martyr Popes Urban and Lucius, in the Catacombs, whence all were transferred to the new church, so enriched by this Pope that his gifts in silver objects alone amounted to more than 900 lbs weight. Interesting too is Baronius's account of what he had himself seen on the re-opening of the tomb of St. Cecilia in works for the first restoration of this church, under Clement VIII. There, after the lapse of seven centuries, lay the body as deposited by Paschal I, in a coffin of cypress within another of marble, vested in gold tissue, with linen clothes steeped in blood at the feet, besides remnants of silk drapery; the figure not laid at full length on the back, but reclining on one side, the limbs contracted, the face mostly concealed, — exactly as represented in the beautiful statue by Maderno now in the recess under the high altar; and as Clement VIII ordered it to be reinterred in the same coffin of cypress within a shrine of silver, 4392 gold scudi in value. The report of what ensued after Pope Paschal's dream, and the evidence of the historian as an eye-witness afford indeed proof confirmatory to all essential details in that pathetic story of

— rapt Cecilia, Seraph-haunted Queen  
Of harmony —

in regard to whom, the Virgin Bride, the teacher and Martyr of Truth, some tender reverence akin to worship might surely be permitted.

rapid decline even as these works stand in comparison with the mosaics of Paschal I, though but the interval of three years separated the two pontificates: the figure of the Saviour blessing is here, as usual, attended by the chief Apostles, and also by the two St. Marks, the Evangelist and Pope, by SS. Agapitus and Felicissimus (both deacons, and vested as such, holding the sacred book), St. Agnes, and Gregory IV, who holds the usual model in his hands; the formality of this group being increased by the position of each figure on a separate platform — a poor expedient now becoming common. The Phoenix on its funeral pyre is seen below the Saviour's figure; and on the key-stone of the arch is the monogram of Gregory's name. In the dress of the deacons and Pope Mark, we see one of the earliest representations of ecclesiastical vestments like those still in use at the altar. On the open book in the Saviour's hand, the motto *Ego sum Lux, Ego sum Vita, Ego sum Resurrectio*, is nobly appropriate — indeed the sole detail that satisfies in this art-work.

A church overlooking the Forum and skirted by the Via Sacra, built (as Anastasius tells us) by Leo IV, took the name *S. Maria Nova*, because succeeding to another, called *S. Maria Antiqua*, in the same place. Its lofty campanile, one of the finest specimens of this class in Rome, is now the sole remnant, on the outside, of the original structure; the present front, of the XVII century, being indeed an insult to the majesty of ruin around. In the interior remain, of ninth-century work, only a beautifully inlaid pavement and the mosaics in the apsidal vault, a composition serving, still more than that at S. Maria in Domnica, to illustrate the religious bias of the age; the supreme subject, here centrally placed, being the Madonna with the Child, seated on a throne and gorgeously attired like a Byzantine empress, her head crowned, her person profusely decked with jewels — looking indeed, not like the lowly Handmaid of the Lord, but rather a faded actress in the part of some stage-queen. Beside her stand, under pictured arcades, the Apostles Peter, John, James,



and Andrew, each with a scroll; on the keystone of the arch is the holy monogram; and within the vaulting, an early example of that rich fan-like pattern that eventually became a favourite in mosaic-decoration for churches, here with the rare detail of a cross, between two palms, seen as reversed, on a globe; and from the border a hand issuing, with a gemmed folial crown held over the head of Mary — the indication of the Divine presence with honour such as, in the earlier mosaics, is given to the Saviour *alone*. In this we have striking evidence to the growth of Madonna-worship; for Mary appears *now* as indeed nothing less than she is imagined in popular devotion at this day — the *Regina Coeli*; and if Horace could return to life, once more to walk along the Via Sacra, should he retire from the Summer-heat into this church, he might suppose that here, under some (to him) strangely novel art-treatment, the intent were to display before the worshipper Juno with the infant Mars, or Isis with Horus on her lap.

Another valuable specimen of the art of this period — Byzantine, not Roman, in origin, and referred to the time of Leo III, or at least to the IX century — is the Dalmatic at St. Peter's, said to be the identical vestment which Emperors used to assume, when, among the rites of their coronation, they were created Canons of this Basilica. Of blue silk, embroidered with silver and gold as well as with silk thread of different colours, it presents one of the earliest examples of Christian Art under the Western Empire, and one of the last in which classic influence is still apparent; its embroidered groups displaying a degree of freedom and dignity of motive scarce approached in later mediaeval art. On the front appears the Saviour, a majestic figure in long white robes, with cruciform nimbus, seated on a semicircle, probably meant for the firmament, with feet resting on two winged globes — or (as those objects might be considered) two serpents, in annular coils, symbolic of Eternity; an ample halo surrounding Him, within whose circle, near His head and feet, are the winged symbols of the Evangelists, each in half-length, and

holding a book ; besides these ( alike within the nimbus ), a numerous company of Angels and Saints. On the upper part is the Transfiguration, designated in the Greek, on one side, as Ἡ Μεταμορφωσις; the Saviour being here seen within a wide starry-formed nimbus; beside Him, Moses and Elias hovering in air, the former with the tablets of the Law, the latter with a book; below, the three Apostles, crouching on the ground and averting their faces from the glory now revealed to them. Intermediate between these groups is again seen the Saviour, addressing Apostles or Disciples, but on what recorded occasion there is nothing to indicate. On the sleeves of the vestment are two other groups referring to the Institution of the Eucharist; in one of which the Saviour is giving the bread; in the other, the cup to not more than three Apostles. A tree with branches interwoven through the entire composition on one side; and, on both the inner and outer, embroidered gold crosses ( in the Greek form ) fill up the interstices; the tints in the several groups being discernible, though, indeed, much faded; the general outlines, traits of countenances and folds of draperies almost exempt from such injuries as time inflicts. In the chief figure it is remarkable how much the benign and gracious predominate rather than the ascetic severity that distinguishes other Byzantine conceptions; and considering the long eclipse about to ensue after the epoch to which this work is ascribed, we might call it, as in other reference has been called the bust of Caracalla at the Capitol, the « last sigh of Art ».

Not only the diaconal vestment, but the cope, sandals, and even the mitre were assumed by the Emperor in those elaborately symbolic rites; and after the crown, the ring, and the sword had been put on him by the Pontiff, he officiated as subdeacon at the solemn Mass ensuing; then rode through the streets to the Lateran, his chamberlains scattering coin among the people, the Clergy and *scholæ* receiving him at several stations with chants of gratulation; the day's festivities concluding with a banquet at the Papal palace.

Another species of coronation, earlier conferred by Popes, was that with which they created the Patrician of Rome, a rank formerly considered to emanate from the imperial power alone; and in transferring which to the sphere of their prerogatives, the successors of St. Peter achieved a step towards their own independent sovereignty. What Byzantine Emperors had granted as the highest honour to Merovingian kings, the Popes now gave, in their own name, to princes of the race of Pepin, and with it a right of protectorate over Rome — the primitive idea in the conference of all princely powers by the Pontificate. The Patrician elect was invested with the mantle (or *chlamys*) and ring, a gold diadem was set on his head, and a diploma given him in the Pope's autograph to the effect: « We accord to thee such honour, that thou mayest administer justice to the Church of God and to the poor, and render account to the Supreme Judge ». The Roman people swore fidelity, not indeed allegiance, to him, accepting him as a protector subordinate to their spiritual and temporal chief.

But the dynasty for whom the honours of coronation at Rome were first devised, had brief existence; and the reigns of Charlemagne's successors were agitated by civil wars enfeebled by the vices or incapacities of princes whose historic part was almost utterly inglorious, and who caused impediment rather than impulse to Christian civilization. Pepin, the son of Charlemagne, reigned in Italy, 806-'10, during his father's lifetime. As to him, alike as to Louis II and Lothaire I, it may be said that this country had some cause for gratitude to its Frankish rulers; and the unfortunate young Bernhard, son of Pepin — who died in consequence of the horrid punishment of blinding inflicted for his offence in waging war against his uncle, and by order of that uncle, Louis, the so-called « pious », — seems to have been beloved (see the chronicle of Andrea). Lothaire I, Emperor and king of Italy after the death of that Louis (840), divided the throne with his son, Louis II (844-'75), who, as Balbo observes, was more Italian than any other of

these princes, but had continually to struggle for his states with the Dukes of Capua, Benevento, and Salerno, besides the invading Saracens — the scourge of this land during the IX century. Charles « the Bald », his son, was crowned king at Pavia, and Emperor at Rome; but had soon (877) to fly before the successful usurpation of his nephew Carlomann, who associated with himself on the throne his brother Charles « the Fat », 879. The latter, from 880, became sole king of Italy, and from 884 resumed the imperial dignity left in abeyance during three years, uniting once more, but for the last time, the whole Empire under the same sceptre.

Pepin held his court at Verona; Louis II, at, or near, Pavia, the principal seat of the Frankish, as once of the Longobard kngs. After the death of Charles the Fat, 888, the race of Charlemagne, in direct descent on the male side, became extinct; and between that year and 924, six kings held or struggled for the Italian crown. At one period Guido of Spoleto, served by Frankish troops, held the western, while Berengarius of Friuli ruled in the eastern provinces. The son of the former, Lambert, shared and inherited the imperial title (894) while yet a child, and while his party contended to secure for him the Italian kingdom against two competitors, both more or less supported — the German Arnulph and Berengarius, the latter of whom became sole king in 899; but had soon to yield to a more seccessful rival. Louis king of Provence, invited to ascend the much-disputed throne by the Marquis of Tuscany and other Italian princes adverse to Berengarius — in this following the very same line of policy so much blamed in the Popes, and certainly with less excuse for it. The new claimant, thus introduced, was accepted as king at Pavia in the year 900, and crowned as Emperor at Rome in 901; the bestowal of the imperial title being now considered to pertain exclusively to the Papacy.

In the successive amplifications and renewals of Charlemagne's donation, we can hardly suppose, at least in regard to some of the states included, that the Frankish Emperors



contemplated anything more than a protectorate, or honorary presidentship, for the Papacy. Louis I, besides confirming all that his predecessor had bestowed, nominally gave to Pope Paschal the City and Duchy of Rome, Perugia, Todi, Anagni, and Alatri; in the Neapolitan states several « patrimonies », besides the cities of Arpino, Benevento, and Capua; also the entire islands of Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily, which last neither he nor his successors of the same dynasty ever owned (1). The testament of Charlemagne divides a certain portion of his personal property over twenty-two cities, all designated as metropolises of his Empire: the first three, Rome, Ravenna, and Milan; his bequest to Rome (or rather to the shrine of St. Peter where it was to be placed) being a silver table with an incised map of Constantinople; to Ravenna, a similar map of Rome on silver; and the Emperor's idea of his sovereign rights over all those cities alike is certainly implied in that document, no less clearly than his adherence to the spiritual power of the Pope is expressed in his deed of privileges to the city of Aix la-Chapelle, cited by Eginhard.

The great Church of Milan sustained an illustrious part both in civil and religious interests; and now begins to appear in art-history also, with magnificence equal to herself. Her Archbishops claimed the exclusive right of crowning, and, in some cases, even electing the kings of Italy. With revenues of 80,000 sequins (or gold florins) per annum, they extended jurisdiction over eighteen suffragan bishoprics, and over fourteen territories with authority temporal as well as spiritual. That original division of Italy, under the first Christian Emperors, into two chief dioceses, the Urbicarian (or Roman), and Italic (or Milanese), seems to assign equal honours to the pontiffs of both metropolises: and it is certain that, till the latter years of the XI century, the Milanese was in no man-

(1) As to this extraordinary, and indeed fruitless donation of the three islands, Cenni affirms that it was certainly made, but at what date is not to be determined.

ner subject to the Roman See ; its Prelates being elected originally by popular suffrage , and afterwards dependent on the Emperors for investiture : their suffragans receiving consecration directly from themselves , without occasion to refer to any other ecclesiastical superior.

Even the historians whose sympathies are avowedly on the Papal side — Ughelli and Cesare Cantù — acknowledge that, up to the X century at least, « the Milanese Clergy claimed for the Church of St. Ambrose a rank not inferior to that of St. Peter's » (Cantù, *Storia d. Italiani*). And its rite, the Ambrosian, called after, but older than the time of, that saint, was more widely-extended, in the Carlovingian period, than the Roman itself; being now retained only in this one archdiocese, though perhaps the most ancient type of Christian liturgy extant. One is sorry to find that this conspicuous Church had already begun to decline from its worthier antecedents. The prelate nineteenth in succession from St. Ambrose obtained his rank by simoniac means; and the traffic in holy orders had here become a scandal that called for the reprobation of Pope Paschal in 820. An anonymous memoir of this Archbishopric, referred by Muratori to either the IX or X century, allows to it rank only *second* to the See of Rome — a significant avowal if from a recognised spokesman; but the testimony, for about a thousand years, to the primitive autonomy held by all Christian bishops seems the special historic part of the Milanese See.

The first cathedral of note at Milan, S. Tecla, with an octagonal baptistery adjacent, but apart, remained erect, long after it had lost that character, till 1540, when it was demolished by the Spanish government. The next, that became more conspicuous, was founded by St. Ambrose, A. D. 387, and dedicated to SS. Gervasius and Protasius, the martyrs whose bodies were discovered and laid under its altar by himself. About A. D. 868, that church, now known as S. *Ambrogio*, was rebuilt, and a quadrangular portico raised in front, by the Archbishop Anspertus, who also restored the

fortifying walls, and did much to renovate this city after the shocks suffered during the Gothic wars. But in after time it became necessary to restore this later building, as was effected by the Archbishop Galdinus in 1169, when, in the greater part, the architecture of the IX century disappeared, except indeed its noblest accessory, that quadrangle of porticoes, besides one of the lofty belfry-towers that flank the façade, the sculptured bronze portals, the apse with its mosaics, and confessional, the columns with Tuscan capitals (the latter, however, supposed more modern), and the circular arches supporting the vault, below which were thrown up the acute arches in the later works. *S. Ambrogio* is the finest example of the early basilica-type in northern Italy, the region where, after the fall of Empire, sacred architecture first acquired a complete and intelligently organized style, partaking both of the Roman and Byzantine, whilst in certain features differing from both; the style which, in fact, continued dominant in the West from the V to the XI century, co-extensively with the Latin Church herself. And the example here before us shows that, up to this period at least, sacred architecture continued true to its high and proper aim, that seeks to embody in the material building a type of the spiritual Church, her discipline and mysteries, without which the essential character proper to the Christian temple is lost, and we have only to look forward to the last degradation either in Paganish renaissance, or in those chapels of modern sectaries, where the altar with all its sanctities and heaven-lit fires is lost behind an unsightly pulpit, the central and engrossing object. The system of symbolism in early Art, developed under the Longobards, and henceforth obtaining more and more in the sacred edifice, is presented in a very curious series among the outer details at *S. Ambrogio* (the portal and columns of the atrium); and here we see, besides the figures familiar in such mystic acceptation, birds and animals, — also Adam and Eve — the Centaur, emblematic either of the lower passions or the swift course of man's life; the Syren, of Sin and

its dangers; also the pomegranate (perhaps its first appearance in symbolic sense), to imply, by its numerous seeds, the abundant charity of the saints (v. *Allegranza*, « *Sacri Monumenti di Milano* »). The mosaics on the apse are interesting (often, I believe, restored, but still as to design of the IX century): their principal subjects being the Saviour enthroned between SS. Gervasius and Protasius; St. Ambrose celebrating Mass at a small cylindrical altar, the only ornament upon which is a plain cross; St. Martin (another Milanese Saint) at the ambon near, in act of chanting the Gospel, Other mosaics in a lateral chapel, where we see the figure of St. Victor holding a cross with a singularly formed monogram of the holy name, have been referred to the IV century; and lately have been discovered some remarkable arabesques, with the fish in several examples. But the great art-treasure here is the shrine or altar for St. Ambrose's Relics, presented by the Archbishop Angilbertus, A. D. 835, at cost reported by Ughelli as 30,000 gold solidi, or 80,000 gold florins — the first magnificent and elaborate example of metallurgy we have yet had to notice in Christian Art (1): the front of pure gold, the sides and back of silver partly encrusted with enamel; the entire surface profusely studded with gems. The numerous reliefs in compartments, by an artist whose name, « *Wolfinus* » (apparently Teutonic), is fortunately preserved in an inscription, with the title he gives himself, « *magister faber* » — represent, on the front, recognisable subjects from

(1) Not that such works were at this period new in the art-range. Shrines incrustcd with silver or gold, set with gems, and surrounded by reliefs of scriptural or legendary subjects, were numerous in France, and no doubt had been wrought in Italy, from the VIII century. That of St. Martin of Tours was a master-piece of orfèvrerie; and other saintly tombs used to be adorned with laminae of silver or gold. As to the shrine of St. Ambrose, Cicognara concludes that the artist was certainly Italian; and Lanzi observes that in style it may be placed on a par with the most beautiful of the ivory diptychs that enrich sacred museums.



the New Testament, laterally to the figures of Our Lord, the XII Apostles, and emblems of the Evangelists; on the sides, Archangels, Angels with phials, and the principal Saints and Martyrs of Milan; on the back, XII scenes from the life of St. Ambrose, as follows: the Saint, as a sleeping child, with bees (presage of his eloquence) swarming around his cradle; assuming the command of the Ligurian and eastern provinces of Italy; elected Archbishop by popular suffrage, and attempting to escape; his baptism *after* that election; his consecration; his presence in spirit at the funeral of St. Martin of Tours; his preaching, prompted by Angels; healing the lame; beholding a vision of the Saviour; an Angel calling St. Honoratus, bishop of Vercelli, to administer the Viaticum to him on his deathbed; his death, Angels attending to receive his soul. A metrical inscription in nine lines is carried through these reliefs, beginning:

Emicat alma foris rutiloque decore venusta  
Arca metallorum, gemmisque compta coruscat.

The Neapolitan Church now begins to be conspicuous under its ducal government. Its ancient cathedral, called, from the episcopal founder, *Stephania*, was burned down by fire caught from the Paschal candle on the night of Easter, during which it was the local usage to leave it unextinguished; but soon afterwards (790) rose again, rebuilt with splendour by another bishop Stephen, aided by all the citizens. To that new edifice bishop John (ob. 847) transferred all the tombs of his predecessors, causing their portraits to be painted on the walls above their monuments here. The same liberal prelate founded schools for Grammar and for vocal music; opened a hospice for the poor and the stranger, within the atrium (a not uncommon arrangement) of his cathedral; himself an adept in the copying of books, he appointed persons to be employed continually in that task. Athanasius (ob. 872) rebuilt the church of St. Januarius, founded by bishop Agnellus about 675; en-

gaged artists to paint the figures of sainted Doctors on its walls; and, besides other precious gifts, bestowed on it an altar-pallium with the martyrdom of that Patron Saint represented in needle-work. The library of this See was not forgotten in the donations from its prelates. Some paintings in the Neapolitan Catacombs are referred by good judges to the IX century — if so, a proof that those retreats were yet frequented for devotional purposes. Religion in the Neapolitan province (see the life of St. Antoninus, abbot of Sorrento, in Mabillon, « Acta ») gave early indication of the character to this day distinguishing its population, most devout among Italians, yet least exemplifying the influence of faith upon morals or intellect — not indeed that this character, where uncorrupted, is altogether devoid of interesting and amiable traits. That people are praised, in the IX century, for their zeal in renovating and adorning altars and oratories, keeping lights perpetually kindled before shrines, making offerings, each to the best of his means, to the Church; and their to this day proverbial worship of Saints is anticipated by the Sorrentines of that distant time, who were eager to increase the devotion to their five holy Patrons; as to one of whom, St. Antoninus, they believed that none could swear « by his Relics » falsely without the certain sequel of Divine chastisement! Striking is the story, also in credit among them, of the apparition of that Saint, with the other holy ones of Sorrento, on board a Saracen ship, in order to terrify those marauders from an intended descent upon the divinely-protected coast! Already had been introduced in that province the barbarism, ominous for the dignity of Art, of nailing gilt crowns to sacred pictures, an outrage against sense and taste persisted in to this day, with incredible want of judgment, by the Italian Church (1).

(1) The Chapter of St. Peter's own a fund appropriated to the sole object of « crowning », from year to year, the most noted images of the Madonna!

In regard to the cathedral of Verona antiquarians have much disputed. It was certainly completed by A. D. 806 ; and the epitaph to an archdeacon , Pacificus (who founded seven churches in this city , and was himself a skilful artist in wood , stone , and metal ) tells that he ordered repairs thirty years after the death of Charlemagne , namely , 844. The apse and lateral walls near the chancel may be of the original structure ; otherwise this grand and characteristic building cannot be referred , in any part , to date earlier than the XII century. A genuine and still intact specimen of the IX century is the crypt of St. Zeno , founded to contain the tomb of that saintly bishop of Verona , by Pepin , king of Italy : with low semicircular vault supported by forty columns irregular in their shafts and capitals , this sole remnant of the original church embodies an idea yet new in Italian architecture ; and a mysterious gloom , a brooding presence of antiquity , give most impressive effect to those dim-aisles and crowded pillars under its low-arched roof.

As to the architects of this period little is known , except that the Comasque builders still retained the pre-eminence and privileges they had enjoyed under the Longobard kings , confirmed to them by Charlemagne , with exemption from all local statutes and burdens ; and , like favour being extended towards them by the Popes , they were allowed to fix their own wages , while practitioners not of their society were forbidden to enter into rivalry against them.

In form , symbolism , costume , public worship had become almost what it is at the present day in the Latin Church , though perhaps with less of the theatrical or superfluous than is often seen in the Italian « festa » (1). Decoration had

(1) Except indeed in the simplicity of the altar itself. In the numerous representations of sacred rites by pencil or chisel , prior to the XVI century , we see nothing like the overloaded finery or image-displays of modern Italian churches. Altars are of dimensions much smaller than at present , either without ornament , or simply with the

developed into the utmost splendour, indeed with more costliness of material than is now at all common. On festivals the sanctuary was in a blaze of light ; draperies embroidered with sacred figures , and sometimes glistening with gems , were suspended between the columns ; groups in fine needlework adorned the altar cloths ; metallurgy, gold or silver reliefs , shone in the sanctuary or on the bindings of the Gospel. In a once wealthy monastery, Casauria, dedicate to the Trinity, founded (866) by Louis II on a river-island in the Abruzzo, that Emperor, besides revenues liberally conferred, numerous gold and silver vessels ec., bestowed draperies « radiant with gold and gems », not only for suspending round the walls, but sufficient for the vestments of the monks on high

Cross, much more frequently than the Crucifix, upon the mensa. In the XIII century we see altars with neither Cross, tapers, nor any ornament whatsoever (shrine by Giovanni da Pisa, Arezzo Cathedral, 1286) ; or else with the Cross alone (Cimabue, Florence Uffizi) ; in the XIV we see it, even at such a solemnity as a Coronation, without any kind of ornament, either Cross or tapers (tomb of Guido Tarlati, Arezzo Cathedral, 1320-30), or with the Cross alone, as in Giotto's illustrations of the life of St. Francis (Florence Acad.) In a painting of the XI century, Italian School, the altar, at Mass, supports merely two tapers and a small Cross (v. Agincourt) ; in the miniature groups on a superb Gothic reliquary, at Orvieto, a Bishop in one subject, and priests in two others officiate at altars on which are tapers and the Cross ; in the frescoes by Fra Angelico, at the Vatican chapel of St. Laurence, is seen a celebration at an altar on which stands a plain Cross without any other object. The first instance I can find in which graven images appear is in the above-named reliquary at Orvieto (XIV century), one group being the Pope and Cardinals seated before an altar, on the predella of which stand statuettes of the Virgin and Child and two Saints. The paintings lately discovered at S. Clemente alike show the simplicity of altar-furniture in earlier ages ; and for the IX century the mosaic at S. Ambrogio is sufficient evidence. Even as represented by Raphael and Andrea Del Sarto, the decoration of the altar is simple compared with its actual profuseness.



days (1). Other now common adornment of the sacred walls, was their complete covering with groups and decorative patterns in fresco-painting, so far required by prevalent feeling as to be prescribed by a law of Charlemagne, and probably in use, as thus enforced, till about the end of the X century; afterwards neglected, but revived in the XIV century. And late discoveries in the now subterranean *S. Clemente* at Rome, and *S. Ambrogio* at Milan, have supplied most valuable proof in extant art of this ancient system. The celebrations, now becoming frequent, of private Masses, and the discontinuance of the Communion once participated in, as the sense of primitive faith required, by *all* allowed to be present, Clergy and laity, are signs of change, wide-spread and integral, that announce the transition into a new phase greatly different from the Church's earlier life. The idea of the holiest Christian ordinance as a sacerdotal sacrifice now tends to efface every other in the acceptance of its character; and ever increasingly prominent is the bias that at last completely withdraws from all perception and operating influence of principles involved in the primordial truth at the heart of Christianity — that not the Clergy alone, but the entire body of believers constitute the Catholic Church.

We have advanced far into the period commonly known as that of the « dark ages »; yet when we consider the produce and movement of mind, we see even in these troublous times the fulfilment of earlier promises. No such thing as absolute « renaissance » is in fact possible, because no absolute death supervenes under Christian civilization. In the

(1) The Emperor obtained by special favour, from Pope Adrian II, the body of St. Clement, not long previously brought from the Crimea to Rome, and now transferred with great honours to this monastery, henceforth dedicated also to that Saint. Muratori gives engravings of the antique reliefs on its church front, representing the whole story of this « translation » of the relics from Rome to the Abruzzo — an art-work whose date I cannot ascertain.

IX century, and still more in that which follows, the light becomes dimmed, but never is extinguished; and progress, the indelible characteristic of *this* civilization at all times, may have been won more efficiently than we can explain through the sad experiences of error and the dispelling of illusion. The desire for, and the efforts to disseminate, knowledge, are still vigorous. Education is mainly, though not, it seems, exclusively, entrusted to the Clergy; and the decree of Lothaire for founding schools in the chief Italian cities, with a preamble setting forth that «in every part of Italy learning was totally extinct», designates, for Ivrea, the bishop of the diocese; for Padua, a monk, either Scottish or Irish, named Dungall, as public teachers. A bishop of Modena obliged his priests to keep schools for all children brought to them; at Lucca the portico of the cathedral served as class-room. An archbishop of Milan (in the VII century) surrounded himself with pupils to whom he personally gave instruction in the «seven liberal Arts», that encyclopedia of mediaeval learning, which comprised Grammar, Dialectics, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Music. At Rome the schools founded by St. Gregory for the speciality of musical tuition, had become colleges for perhaps the complete «cursus» of ecclesiastical studies, where Anastasius tells that many of the Popes, whose lives he was compiling, had been educated.

Of libraries now in existence we have not unfavourable notice. That at Novalesse is said to have contained 6666 codes (a round number perhaps exaggerated), which, together with their church-treasures, the monks carried to Turin in their flight under apprehension of a Saracenic incursion, and which in great part perished, when that city was visited by those invaders from Sicilian shores. The archdeacon Pacificus (said in his epitaph to have been the first glossator of the Scriptures) bequeathed 248 books to the chapter of Verona. Pope Stephen V presented several to the Saint Paul's basilica; and the then wealth of the Lateran library

may be inferred from the request of a French abbot to Benedict III (in 855) for the loan, or gift, of St. Jerome's Comments on the Prophet Jeremiah, the « *De Oratore* » of Cicero, Quintilian's *Institutes*, and the Comment on Terence by Donatus. Communion with other radiant minds of antiquity had by no means ceased—at times indeed discountenanced, but, in her better mood, encouraged by the Church. The monk might become enthusiastic over Virgil, like Alcuin, of whom it is said: « *Virgilii amplius quam Psalmorum amator* »; and a special favourite was Martianus Capella, the first classic translated into a modern (the German) tongue so early as the XI century. Among Italian writers of this age Joannes Diaconus, of Naples, stands among the first, as the biographer of the bishops of that city and of St. Gregory the Great. Andrea, a priest of Brescia, wrote the compendious history of Italy from 568 to 874; but above all valuable in its literary walk is the chronicle by Agnellus, the lives, namely, of the prelates of his own see, Ravenna. Theodulph, an Italian, invited into France and appointed bishop of Orleans, by Charlemagne, produced not only theological works but six books of poems on sacred and other themes; among his hymns being that, « *Gloria, laus et honor tibi sit Rex Christ* », still heard, exultant in vocal melody, during the magnificent procession from the altar to the closed portals on Palm Sunday; and an affecting story tells that he won his liberty, when imprisoned at Angers, by singing that hymn as the Emperor Louis I passed within hearing; the prelate having been confined in a cloister, with several other ecclesiastics, because compromised in the cause of the young king Bernhard against his uncle; but provoking investigators will not allow us the belief in that tale of the might of poesy over wrong. Valuable indeed are the monastic chronicles, those first essays of European history, now beginning to be indited by obedient and diligent monks; but the moral light shines most beautifully in individual portraiture — preserved to us by such giants of learning and industry as Muratori, Mabillon, the Bollandists — as in the « *Acta* » of Benedictine

Saints, and in the above-mentioned lives of the great Italian prelates. The conscientious, pious, ever energetic Pastor of these times presents a type and an office utterly unlike anything produced, or that could have arisen, out of Heathen society: a representative of the spiritual principle amidst worldly conflicts, humble yet sublime; standing between the highest and the lowest; the associate, sometimes the reprover, of princes, and the friend of publicans and sinners. Were other proof wanting, the phenomenon of such a sanctified and ever-efficient agency as this would be enough to convince that in Christianity alone is the secret of man's highest good and attainable happiness, even in the present life.

Several Popes of this period may be classed with the eminent for learning not less than virtue. A pleasant picture, preserved by Ozanam, allows us a glimpse into the more intimate life of the Roman « Curia », not at all shaded by ascetic gloom, or betraying intellectual decline: the occasion, Easter; the scene, that portico before the chapel of St. Venanzio in the Lateran baptistery whose intercolumnations are now walled up, so as to convert it into a superfluous oratory fronting « San Giovanni » — Here, after the grand Vespers in the basilica, the Pope, with his Cardinals and others of his court, used to repair to listen to a Greek anthem sung by the pontific choristers — and, we may infer, understood by the reverend audience, whilst the « wine of honour », no doubt the best from the Campagna vintage, was served to his Holiness, afterwards to be sent round, as interchange of the good wishes — the *buona Pasqua* in modern phrase — for the sacred season.

Through superior organization, through higher aims and theories of ecclesiastical duty than elsewhere had root, did Rome succeed in establishing the most perfect and enduring system of spiritual government the world has ever seen. The persuasion that, under whatever modifications, the cause of Christianity is *one*, the jewel the same though set in different caskets, and that all the phases this Religion has



passed through have been subordinate to its ulterior advantages, and therefore to those of Humanity, — this, I believe, will be confirmed by the study of the Papal History, if entered into with calm impartial spirit. From that pursuit many may rise convinced that the ascendant so wonderfully attained and ably held by those crowned High Priests, was, from the first and throughout, proportionate to their deserts, not as men but as an institution; was more or less a potent reality in the degree required for the general good; and that its endurance in the future is guarantied for so long as the Church shall derive benefit or piety support from it (1).

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#### CHRONOLOGY OF MONUMENTS.

ROME S. Prassede, S. Maria in Domnica, 817; S. Cecilia, 821; S. Marco rebuilt, 833 (façade of 15th century, interior modern); S. Martino ai Monti, rebuilt 834 (modernized 1650); S. Maria Nova, (or S. Francesca Romana) — façade of 17th century, SS. Quattro Coronati, and S. Michele in Sassia (modernized in 18th century), 817-'55; tower of S. Maria in Cosmedin, about 860; choir of S. Clemente (raised from lower

(1) For the original literature and all requisite material towards the history of this age, see Muratori, « *Rer. Ital. Script.* » tt. I, II; Mabillon, « *Annales Ord. S. Bened.* », and « *Acta SS. Ord. S. Bened.* »; for the entire correspondence between the Popes and the Frankish Princes, Cenni, « *Monumenta Dominationis Pontif. sive Codex Carolinus* »; for the history of the ancient Sees, Ughellius, « *Italia Sacra* ». The best and most interesting modern illustration of these last two centuries is supplied by Ozanam, « *Civilization Chrétienne chez les Francs* »; Capefigue, « *Charlemagne* »; Gregorovius, and Papencordt, « *Geschichte d. Stadt. Rom. im Mittelalter* »; Cantù, « *Storia d. Italiani* »: see also Orsi, « *Origine del Dominio dei Rom. Pontefici* ».

to upper church), 872; chapel of S. Benedetto in Piscinula? Porphyry statuettes of two Emperors embracing (Greek), in the Vatican library. Miniature Art: Latin Bible, at monastery of St. Paul's, presented either by Charlemagne or Charles the Bald, with portrait of the Emperor, and biblical scenes; Greek Menologium, or illustrated lives of Saints for each day in six months, Vatican; Greek Topography of Cosmas, and Greek Isaiah, Vatican; Pontifical of Landulph, bishop of Capua, and Formula for blessing font and holy water, Minerva Library (rite of Baptism by immersion represented among illustrations in the latter) — v. Agincourt for engravings of all these miniatures. For earlier specimens of sacred art in this walk, see the « Joshua », with 21 illustrations, VII or VIII century, Vatican.

FLORENCE. SS. Apostoli (erroneously ascribed to Charlemagne and to date 786), in type similar to, and probably by same architect as, S. Michele in Sassia, Rome.

NAPLES. S. Januarius restored about 870; paintings in Catacombs, figures of SS. Curtius and Desiderius.

MILAN. Basilica of SS. Gervasius and Protasius rebuilt, dedicated to S. Ambrose (restored 1169); atrium, apse, confessional, and perhaps portal, of 868-'81; mosaics of 832; shrine of S. Ambrose, 835.

VERONA. Cathedral, finished 806; restored 844; apse antique, remainder of actual building of the 12th century; basilica of S. Zenone, 806-'40, crypt only antique, church rebuilt, 1138-'78; S. Lorenzo, Romanesque basilica-type.

BRESCIA. Cathedral (*duomo vecchio*), rotunda with insulated peristyle, round-headed arches, and dome; founded by count Villerado and completed by count Raimone (lords of Brescia), before 838.

PISA. S. Paolo in Ripa d'Arno (served as cathedral till 1118), Romanesque basilica-type, façade probably later (Ricci calls this church « one of the most perfect examples of ninth-century architecture in Italy »); S. Pietro in Grado, near Pisa, Romanesque basilica, 805.

ASCOLI. Baptistery, exterior quadrate, interior octagonal from cornice upwards.

CAPUA. Cathedral rebuilt, 836, after restoration of city, the ancient one having been destroyed under the Longobard Dukes, 840; mosaics in apse (the Madonna and Child, SS. Peter, Paul, Stephen, and Agatha) of about 900 (referred by some writers to XI century); church restored in 14th century.

SPOLETO. S. Pietro, extramural (cathedral till XI century), façade with symbolic sculptures of XI century; S. Ansano, crypt with wall-paintings.

SAN GERMANO. Collegiate church of S. Germano, built by Gisu'phus Abbot of Monte Cassino; S. Salvatore, with atrium, marble colonnades, entablature of cypress-wood, and wall-paintings.

SUBIACO. Chapel of S. Benedict, afterwards of S. Sylvester, at the *sacro speco*, about 847; its groined vaulting one of earliest examples in such style.

TUSCANY. Priory of Monte Asinario, on model of earliest style, and still perfect; S. Agata (*pieve* of Mugello): abbey of S. Antimo near Montalcino; abbey of Passignano.

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## XIV.

### **Retrospect of Roman Catacombs.**

It is scarcely possible to overrate the value of such testimony as is supplied in the Catacombs of Rome. At this period when Italy has reached a religious crisis nothing less than portentous, when the very life of her ancient Church seems imperilled, or at least threatened with some tremendous shock, whilst on one hand we have to note the progress of desolating infidelity, and on the other the uncompromising, indeed defiant, maintenance of all that constitutes the excess of ultramontaniam, — that at this transitional epoch such evidence to primitive Christianity should be brought forward with a completeness and fulness of illustration hitherto unattained, and this through means and under the influence of the Spiritual Power whose vital interests are most concerned, whose credit might be most fatally injured if conclusions hostile to its claims should result from this unfolding of the documents of the Past, *this* appears one of the combinations in which we see the guidance of an overruling and divine will in the world's religious life. The language that speaks with silent eloquence in those dim subterranean labyrinths now explored, with indefatigable activity, for the purpose of bringing to light and interpreting all they contain, has indeed been listened to more or less intelligently for ages, and has been often more or less aptly explained by those its originality has impressed; but perhaps the day is yet to come when, more clear and solemn, and addressed



to wider comprehension, it may attain its fullest force, may sound like a trumpet to awaken the sleeping and the dead. Such an appeal seems wanted amidst the religious decay, the indifferentism now diffused over Italy. Valuable as is the literature already at hand for the student of these monuments, much is still wanting for bringing into relief their importance in reference to present realities and requirements. The interesting question is not merely whether certain local practices or popular teaching be, or be not, in accordance with the spirit of what their evidence tells as to the Past, but whether *all* Christian communities have not to learn much, to listen to notes of warning, and be admonished of many things « violently destroyed or silently gone out of mind » in and through these silent revelations. In the art that pertains to their sphere one is struck, at a general view, by the absence of system and pre-arrangement. It was a natural consequence of depression and persecution that the illustration of doctrine in artistic forms should be limited within a narrow range, almost exclusively referring to one Personality, the Divine Master, His miracles and Sacraments, or the more familiar types of that Personality from the Old Testament; but as we descend the stream of time the field expands; while it is still observable that, in such progress, development, not innovation, supervenes; and it is not the less to the person and office of the SAVIOUR that all ultimately tends, that all types and symbols, as well as hope and faith, have constant reference.

An art-illustration of Christianity that altogether omits subjects so conspicuous, indeed obligatory, in the sacred painting and sculpture of the present day, as the Annunciation, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Entombment, the Resurrection, and Ascension; which assigns to Mary but a subordinate historic place in a few scenes from the Evangelic narrative, or as one of the many « Orantes, » in attitude of prayer with outspread arms, like the numerous other figures (mostly, no doubt, intended for portraits of the dead) repre-

sented above tombs — such an illustration is indeed remote from the whole theory of the calling of Art in the service of the sanctuary, as now conceived by Latin Catholicism ; but when we observe the not less distinct proof how essentially the worship of the primitive Church was sacramental in scope and ritual in character , prone to admit an opulent and poetic symbolism as the legitimate clothing of truth, to convey doctrine through the eloquence of imagery and solemnities rather than through other appeals ; when we see that , in outward form at least, the worship of ultra-Protestantism is at present the *most* remote from that of ancient Catholicism in its pristine purity, must we not abandon the idea of using this aggregate evidence from catacombs for any sectarian purpose of attack or vindication ! Must we not rather acknowledge in it a lesson addressed, for warning or reproof, to all Churches, with presentment of a higher norma than any one can be said at this day to realize in practice ?

There is another leading feature that also strikes us in this monumental range : the familiarity with the sacred books presupposed in those to whom it addresses itself. Both the Old and New Testaments are evidently understood to be the mental companions and habitual guides of the faithful who contemplated those simple — often rude — illustrations of their contents on the tufa-walls of the dim chapel or sepulchral corridor ; or, in bolder treatment, on the fronts of sculptured sarcophagi. And here we find perfect coincidence with the testimony in ancient writers, — at the same time a severe reproof against the all but universal, and tacitly approved, ignorance of the Scriptures in which the Italian clergy allow the Italian laity at this day to remain, *never* (that I am aware) recommending or suggesting the private study of the New Testament, whilst hitherto even the authorized version with notes is left, so to say, locked up from the possession of the people by the high price of all editions ; and in Rome , I believe, is less circulated than anywhere else on this side of the Alps. How different the teaching and usages of old, when

S. Jerome extolled the pious matron Paula for knowing the Scriptures *memoriter*, and counselled, for the attainment of perfection in the religious life, the habit of learning some portion of them by heart every day! (1)

It can no more be doubted from the evidence in this antiquarian sphere than from that so abundant in patristic literature to the same effect, that the Eucharistic Rite was *the* leading act of worship, the mystic centre round which the faithful assembled for every occasion of their more solemn devotions, except those of evening or night-vigils, both before and after the age of the first Christian Emperor. The congregational worship of old may be said to have had no existence severed from this sublimely commemorative and holiest of mysteries. Besides the constantly recurring symbolism, and studied choice of illustrations in obvious reference to that sacred Ordinance, besides such more familiar subjects as the Multiplication of Loaves, the Changing of Water into Wine, the Agapae, and the symbols of the fish laid beside, or else carrying, bread marked with a cross, another striking presentment has lately been found, in a picture (Catacombs of Cyriaca), where the shower of manna is seen in thick descent, gathered in the

(1) « Divinas Scripturas saepius lege, imo nunquam de manibus tuis sacra lectio deponatur » (Ep. ad Nepotian. 7). « Statue quot horis sanctam Scripturam ediscere debeas, quanto tempore legere, non ad laborem, sed ad delectationem et instructionem animae » (Ep. ad Demetriad. 45). « Nec licebat cuiquam sororum ignorare psalmos, et non de Scripturis sanctis quotidie aliquid discere » (Ep. ad Eustoch. 49). Most frequently do we see in catacombs the intelligible scroll, sometimes several such objects, in a cistus, held in the hand or placed at the feet of the Apostles, or Master of Apostles; and where two scrolls are laid before a figure above a tomb, may be implied the orthodox acceptance by the deceased of both Old and New Testaments. Small caskets, of gold or other metal, in which a portion of the Gospels, usually, as supposed, the first pages from that of S. John, was enclosed to be worn round the neck, have been found in several subterranean tombs.

folds of vestments by four Israelites, males and females; and I believe we may adopt the interpretation of Martigny, that a fresco in the Callixtan catacombs, where a figure is seen standing above seven baskets filled with what seems a small species of fruit rather than bread, should not be taken for the Multiplication of Loaves, but Moses with the manna gathered in the wilderness; *another* figure near this, holding six cross-marked loaves in the folds of a mantle, being recognizable from type as meant for the Redeemer; and on another wall-surface in the same chapel, a woman drawing water from a well is no doubt intended for the Samaritan, in allusion to that announcement of the Fountain of Life, not inaptly classed with the series of sacramental subjects.

Intelligible symbols designed to signify the union of Three Persons in the Godhead did not become common till comparatively later periods; but not less than eight examples are given by De Rossi from the range of primitive, though not exclusively Roman, monuments, where that symbolism is at once recognised; and in seven of which the monogram of the Holy Name is combined with the well-known triangle. But if the faith in a Triune Deity was, for a long period, but rarely shadowed forth, as may be well accounted for by the traditional reserve of dogmatic teaching and awe-struck modesty of earlier Art, the expression of belief in the absolute Divinity of the Redeemer is most luminous, indeed all-pervading. Though the Divine Master is more frequently represented in historic action, — or enthroned among Apostles, or standing on the mystic mount, from whose base issue four rivers, or symbolically as the Good Shepherd or the Lamb with a cross, — there is one interesting exception to this treatment among the figures gilt on glass, and referred to about the end of the fourth century, where He appears in mysterious vision amid fulness of glory, with radiated head, and holding the globe of sovereignty, a large scroll (the Gospels) being placed in a cistua at His feet; while opposite stands a figure dressed in tunic and mantle, extending one arm, as if to point



out the vision, interpreted by Padre Garrucci, who published this Christian antique in the « *Civiltà Cattolica* », as meant for Isaiah in utterance of prophecy as to the advent of the Light of the World. Among types, Moses is usually considered, and often obviously intended, to prefigure S. Peter, to represent the office of headship over the Old in analogy with that of the Apostle over the New Covenant (unquestionably a leading idea in catacomb-art, though modified by the numerous examples of *equal* honour and dignity ascribed to S. Peter and S. Paul as joint founders and primates of the Church); but there are instances in which the Lawgiver is evidently regarded as the type of the Redeemer, as where in sculptured reliefs we see at one extremity of the grouping the Raising of Lazarus, effected by the touch of a wand on the head of the corpse placed upright, and at the other, the striking of water from the rock; Moses in this act using a similar wand to indicate such idea. In the sacrifice of Abraham this intent is sometimes still more apparent from resemblance in the type of the patriarch's figure to that recognizable as our Lord's in this art-treatment. And the ascent of Elijah in the fiery chariot, exemplified in but few instances within this sphere (a relief at the Lateran Museum, and a sarcophagus at S. Ambrogio, Milan) undoubtedly prefigures the Ascension, a subject deemed too awful for direct presentment by art; the bestowal of the mantle upon Elisba, an episode conspicuous in this scene, being intended (conformably with a passage in S. Chrysostom, Hom. ii. in Ascens.) to signify the last solemn injunction to the Apostles, or the powers conferred upon them by the Divine Master before He left the earth.

Here too we find the first intimation of those emblems of the Evangelists that later became indispensable in the mystic grouping for sacred walls: on a terra cotta lamp being seen the Lamb, with nimbus and cross, beside an Angel and a winged Ox, the figures understood to signify St. Mathew and St. Luke. By the V century the Four Creatures were generally admitted with definite acceptance in art (mosaics at S. Maria Mag-

giore, at St. Paul's, and in the archiepiscopal chapel at Ravenna): the source, that description of their appearance around the form of Deity in the Vision of Ezeckiel; the reference, to St. Mathew in the Angel, because the human nature and descent of Christ are particularly set forth in his Gospel; to St. Mark in the Lion, because the 3rd verse in his 4th chapter begins, « The voice of one crying in the wilderness »; to St. Luke in the Ox, because the Sacrifice of the Atoner is more especially dwelt on by him; to St. John in the Eagle, on account of the sublimity of the truths he contemplates, as that bird gazes on the Sun, and which in majestic language he declares. But some writers (as Durandus) see still higher meaning, in allusion to the four historic aspects of Redemption through Christ — the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, conformably with which sense an old poet interprets these emblems:

Quatuor haec Dominum signant animalia Christum:  
Est Homo nascendo, Vitulusque sacer moriendo,  
Et Leo surgendo, coelos Aquilaque petendo.

And perhaps this idea led to a treatment, in later Art, of barbaric effect, that gives to *all* the human figure, with the animal heads to three in the mysterious company.

St. Basil (epistle to Julian) states that the practice of painting Apostles and Martyrs « dated from apostolic times »; and St. Ambrose mentions an authentic portrait of St. Paul (?) In the Vatican Museum are two bronze medallions with the heads of SS. Peter and Paul facing each-other, both found in the Callixtan catacombs, one with the very best example of that early type, certainly derived from remotest antiquity, transmitted through ages for these two Apostles' figures in art. In the most ancient representations the two seem often placed on a par, co-equal, and as such distinguished from other Apostles. Later, in sculptures, the long cross is given to St. Peter; and in two art-works, supposed of the IV century, a

sarcophagus from the Vatican cemetery, and a fresco (Perret, *Catacombes*, v. I, pl. VII), is seen the now well-known subject of the bestowal of the keys. That object, sometimes a single key, became the attribute of St. Peter from the V century, as in the mosaics at St. Paul's, and those (of about A. D. 472) once at S. Agata in Suburra; though, in later works, we still at times see him without that mystic sign, as in the mosaics at S. Lorenzo, where both he and St. Laurence carry similar cross-headed wands, *crux hastata*; at S. Maria Nuova, where he and other Apostles alike carry scrolls; at S. Prassede (lateral chapel), where his mosaic-figure *was* without any symbol. The wand of authority, given to him, (as to the Saviour), *alone* among Apostles, in sculptures perhaps all of the IV century, is indeed significant; and finely expressive is the symbolism on a bronze lamp (at Florence) representing a ship steered by St. Peter. The crowned and vested statue, as now displayed for his festival at the great Papal basilica, is the climax of those gradually-increasing honours that invest his person in art. St. Paul's original attribute was the scroll; not till a comparatively late period, the sword (first example in the mosaic, X century, once over the tomb of Otho II, in the Vatican crypt); and earlier he is sometimes associated with a symbol of sublimer meaning, the Phoenix on a palm-tree, allusive to his teaching of the resurrection.

The fish, and the initial letters comprised in the  $\text{ix}\theta\theta\varsigma$ , are well known; in painting and chiselling, on the terra cotta lamp and funereal stone, that object appears more frequently than any other in the symbolic range; but less common, though found in many tombs, is its form, of bronze or glass, pierced at one end in order to be hung by a cord round the neck as a tessera, given to the neophyte at baptism, and worn to remind of the privileges conferred through that sacrament. The egg, a symbol both of the Resurrection and Regeneration, in which former meaning it has passed into the popular acceptance of so many countries, familiarly seen at Easter, and often on sale dyed purple and set in a crown

of pastry, as at Rome, — this also received its sanction from the primitive Church, and used to be laid, in marble imitation, beside the dead; another symbol, of more recondite meaning, the nut, being also placed in the grave, and taken to signify in its three substances, shell, rind, and kernel, either the consummate virtues of the true Christian, or the Personality of Our Lord, composed of the reasonable soul, the flesh, and bones — or the bitterness of His Passion, the benignity of His Divinity, and the wood of the Cross. (See a curious passage to this effect in S. Augustine, *Serm. de temp. Dom. ant. Nativ.*; also S. Paulinus, *In Nat. ix. S. Felicis*).

Though the symbolism of this art may sometimes seem fantastic and far-fetched, it never wants an element of the truly poetic, being the expression of Love that seeks in all nature for the emblem or shadow of its Divine Object. Such does it appear especially in the multifarious forms chosen to signify the hopes of an immortal future, the reward of life's noblest victory; as the dove with the olive-branch in its beak, signifying the happy issue of a virtuous career; the same bird, or (though less frequent) the hare, feeding on grapes, placed near the holy monogram (this latter usually within a disk), signifying the freed soul rejoicing in the presence of the SAVIOUR: the vase filled with flowers, or sometimes bread (in form like the sacramental) chiselled on the tombstone, as emblem of beatitude, alike with that agapae-banquet, or love-feast, so often seen painted and sculptured, whose ulterior meaning may be intended to comprise both the Eucharistic Sacrament and the joys of Paradise, the believer's supreme privileges in this world and the next; while the bird, either the dove or other species, confined in a cage, implies the faithful under persecution, or the righteous soul imprisoned in the body, — a subject seen in later mosaics as well as in catacomb-art. Trees also, as well as flowers, are frequently brought within this mystic circle, especially the palm, the cypress, the vine, and sometimes the gourd; and when the last-named is seen beside the cypress, with a female —



in many instances, Mary — standing in prayer between, the latter tree (emblem of incorruptibility and endurance, as the cypress was also considered by Paganism) represents the New Testament, whilst the gourd, of frail and transitory growth, stands for the Old, or the law given to perish. Though the persecuted Church is no doubt implied, with still deeper meaning, in such personification as Daniel in the lions' den, type also of the Resurrection, also the three Israelites in the furnace, and Susanna among the elders (a rarer subject), the systematic exclusion of martyrdom, indeed of all death-scenes, is most significant: the few exceptions sufficing only to prove the rule — as a martyrdom of S. Sebastian in small terra cotta relief, found before the time of Bosio, and referred by critics, from evidence of style, to a date not more ancient than the sixth century; also (probably of the fourth century) the death of Isaiah, sawn asunder by two executioners, represented on a glass cup, which Padre Garrucci first edited. What are we to understand in this scrupulous avoidance of all that could fix attention on human merit, in the themes of sacred art, but the implied condemnation of every attempt to dispute the divine pre-eminence of *the Man of Sorrows* to religious regard?

It is true that the reverential feeling entertained for martyrs by the primitive Church is conveyed in many monumental records, and in tone accordant with the subdued tenderness and hope in regard to the dead also manifest in this epigraphic range — as, under date 483, the eulogium on a pious female, « *fidelis in Christo ejus mandata reservans martyrum obsequiis devota* »; and, with stronger expression, but referable to so much later date, (530 or 533), as may account for the difference (v. De Rossi, *Inscript. Christ.*), the following, found in the lately disinterred basilica of S. Stephen, on the Latin Way, « *coelestia munera carpis (gratias agamus) beato martyri qui vos suscepit (in pace)* » (1).

(1) As restored by De Rossi; the words supplied between brackets.

The immense collection of Christian epigraphs edited and commented with so much learning by the above-named gentleman, is not yet completed; but its first volume comprises no fewer than 1374 specimens, (besides several added in an appendix), the great majority from Roman catacombs, some from other places of sepulture, or collections, public or private, in different Italian cities. In this series the first century is represented by but one, recognised by the indication of Vespasian's Consulate, as of A. D. 71; the second century by two; the third by twenty-three inscriptions; while the age distinguished by De Rossi as the « Constantinian », from 310 to 360, supplies ninety-two; and for the short reign of Julian are twenty such records. Till the early years of the fifth century we continue to find many epigraphs undistinguished by symbol or phrase of religious import, and only known as Christian from the place of deposit; though the holy monogram, often with  $\Lambda$  and  $\Omega$  at the head of the chiselled lines, begins to appear and to become frequent from the middle of the IV century. It is not till the V century that symbolism, elsewhere so opulent before this period, becomes conspicuous on the tombstone; and henceforth we begin to see, more or less frequently as years advance, such emblems, touchingly appropriate in reference to the lost ones, as the dove or other birds beside the monogram, the palm or wreath, the vine, the lamb with a palm-branch in its mouth, the vase; and also, of much rarer occurrence, the phoenix with a nimbus, and the dove with a cross over its head. In one singular example, a tombstone (date 400) is literally crowded with emblems: the usual monogram, a pair of scales, the fish, the candelabrum of seven lights, and Lazarus in his sepulchre; the symbol that eventually becomes paramount above all others, the Cross, appearing for the first time distinct and isolated beside an epitaph dated 438. The first instance of phraseology altogether foreign to that of Paganism, occurs in the year 217, « Receptus ad Deum » — beautiful in its profound simplicity! And in 234 occurs first that symbolism where the fish and

anchor are seen together ; the first example of the holy monogram with Greek letters being of 291 — proof how long that sign had become familiar to Christians before being seen emblazoned in gems on the purple of the labarum ; though a rude approach to it , like the first two letters in the holy name, is indeed found earlier, either of 268 or 279, on the tombstone of a child , with an epitaph of deep religious meaning : « In X D N (Christo Domino Nostro) vivas inter sanctis Ihu », (for *JESU*). Under date 331 occurs the monogram together with a palm branch , preceded by the words « in signo », i. e. « in the sign of *CHRIST* ».

Testimonies to doctrines assailed by notorious heresies are not numerous , save in respect to that central object of faith and trust , the Divinity of Him who for us became human ; but we find one striking example of avowed faith in the Almighty Trinity in an epitaph , date 403 , from the Station of the Swiss Praetorians , on the Vatican hill : « Quintilianus homo Dei, Confirmans Trinitatem, Amans Castitatem, Respuens Mundum. Many are the notices as to the hierarchic gradations of the clergy, from the rank of bishop to that of lector ; and we learn something also as to that discipline of celibacy , whose origin and progressive enforcement are much too complex questions to be here discussed. If , as I believe is admitted on all hands , the obligation of the celibate state on subdeacons , alike with those higher in orders , was first enforced by S. Gregory, it is the more interesting to find at a period so near to that saintly pontiff as the end of the V and earlier years of the VI century the proof that « Levites » (whether we are here to understand the diaconal or subdiaconal order) were still at liberty to choose that state which an apostle pronounces « honourable to all » ; two clear testimonies in this sense being as follows , the first (found at S. Paul's on the Ostian Way, date 472) :

« Levitæ conjunx Petronia forma pudoris

His mea deponens sedibus ossa loco.

Parcite vos lacrimis dulces cum conjuge natæ » —

the second, where, contrary to the above, the living address the dead, instead of the dead consoling the survivor, being of date 533 :

« Te Levita parens soboles conjunxque fidelis  
Te mixtis lachrimis luget amata domus ».

And with these simple records as to the social life of the clergy we may compare the counsels of S. Ambrose (*De Officiis Minist.* l. i. 248,9) to such deacons as were in wedlock; the restraints to which ministers of the altar so situated should submit themselves, as prescribed by that saint. The gradually attained pre-eminence of the Roman See is traceable, though not in any striking distinctness, upon these monumental pages; and such evidence as we find serves to refute the uncharitable and utterly superficial theory that pride or cunning were at all concerned in laying the foundations of Papal supremacy. Such base agencies have no power to create enduring and energetic realities; and the impossibility of *not* recognizing a grand vocation for human and religious interests in the Papacy, of *not* seeing the cause of Heaven on earth sustained by such men as S. Leo, S. Gregory, Innocent III, Gregory VII, Nicholas V, must be felt by all possessed of mental gaze that can perceive the genuine progress of Christianity under various influences, and as promoted by diverse instrumentalities.

Among these epigraphs, the date by the year of the Roman bishop begins to be used in the time of Liberius, and somewhat more commonly under his successor Damasus, from 366 or 367, as in the formula, « Sub Damaso Episcopo »; but it is evident that like distinction was allowed to other prelates, and even those of the least important sees; as, in one instance, « Pascasio episcopo », dated 397, which formula being on a tombstone found in Rome, must, as De Rossi concludes, refer to one of those long vanished bishoprics within the immediate environs of that capital — certainly not to the principal See itself, never occupied by either Pope or antipope



of the name Pascasius. So late as the VI century the high position of the Roman Pontiff was to that degree recognised and prescribed that we need not be surprised to find its distinct announcement in the beautiful epitaph of Pope Boniface I (ob. 532):

« Sedis Apostolicæ primævis miles ab annis  
Post etiam toto Præsul in orbe sacer.

Quis te sancte Pater cum Christo nesciat esse  
Splendida quem tecum vita fuisse probat? » —

only four or five words of which are now left in its place in the S. Peter's crypt; but the whole is fortunately preserved, copied from the original, by Gruter and Mabillon.

No well-read person could question the antiquity of prayer for the dead, founded on Hebrew precedent, harmonious with the practice of almost all ancient religions, and adopted by the Church at a period when her apostolic system yet shone forth in pure resplendence; and perhaps if the clergy had never accepted *payment* for such services, nor lowered an office of sublime charity to the vulgar business-level where things done stand in one score, emolument in another, no serious objection to such intercessory devotions would have arisen or been justified. But too apparent is it that excessive confidence in their efficacy, and reliance on the benefits obtainable through the Requiem Masses, have proved a source of scandalous abuse and unspiritual superstition, offering temptation to that avarice, which at last filled to overflowing the cup of provocations against reason, justly vindicated, in this respect at least, by Luther. After looking over the 4374 epitaphs in De Rossi's compilation, I must own that I fail to find any example of prayer referring to the state of the dead in the invisible life, in this whole series. Wherever the customary formula « in pace » is allied with a verb, and that verb is not (as indeed is often the case) mutilated at the end,

the sense is not optative, but past or future; the past being the tense of the verb in the great majority, the indicative the mood in all instances, with obvious allusion to the religious calm of life or blessed serenity in death; as where the elsewhere isolated formula is explained by the context: « *In pace qui vixit* » — « *in pace recessit* » — « *dormit, requievit, in pace* » — « *hic jacet, requiescit, in pace* » — « *in pace vixit* » — « *depositus, dif(functus) in pace* » — « *dormit in pace* »; and in one curious example of Latinity, « *in somno palcis* ». In regard, however, to such controverted questions as Prayer for the Dead and Invocation of Saints, it would be disingenuous to pass over the other set of evidences from the same monumental range, which certainly show us the nucleus, or originating sentiment, out of which those observances rose into their august solemnity. From the epigraphic series might be culled some of striking import, not supplied by De Rossi in the first volume of his great work, but found in Boldetti, or Muratori, and reproduced in the valuable « *Dictionnaire* » of Martigny: « *In orationibus tuis roges pro nobis qui scimus te in* (followed by the monogram for « *Christo* ») — *vivas in Deo et roga, — pete pro filiis tuis, — pete et roga pro fratres et soboles tuos (sic)* »; also the following, that remarkably combines both the religious ideas in question: « *Domina Bassilia commendamus tibi Crescentinus et Micina filia nostra Crescens que vixit men. x et dies* », (Lateran Museum), — the touching invocation to a saint Bassilia, from a father and mother, on behalf of their lost infant. Other important testimony to the idea and feeling in regard to the dead, is that which implies general belief that all those for whom there was reason to entertain hope had passed immediately into beatitude; and whatever may be urged in justification of the doctrine of Purgatory, however soothing, and accordant with attributes of Divine mercy belief in such expiatory state may be, this voice from the primitive Church should not the less excite our reverential attention to its calm utterance respecting such solemn interests. A few, out of many examples

to the purpose, are as follows: « *Dum casta Afrodita fecit ad astra viam — Christi modo gaudet in aula. — Restitit hæc mundo semper coelestia quaerens* (to a female of twenty-one years, date 381) — « *Tuus spiritus a carne recedens est sociatus sanctis pro meritis. — Corporeos rumpens nexus qui gaudet in astris. — Cujus spiritus in luce Domini receptus est* »; also the metrical epitaph to a wife and mother, aged thirty-eight, A. D. 392:

« *Non tamen hæc tristes habitat post limina sedes  
Proxima sed Christo sidera celsa tenet* ».

And to this series I may add one that derives interest from connection with the most beautiful early Christian sculptures extant, on the sarcophagus (in the Vatican crypt) of Junius Bassus, Prefect of Rome, who died a neophyte, at the age of forty-two, A. D. 339, « *Neofitus iit ad Deum viii. Kal. Sept.* »

Generally we find a character of modest reserve, spontaneous and simple utterance in these epitaphs. Before the phrase « *in pace* » had become an established formula, and indeed after its common adoption, no other expression — scarcely can we say, any style — marks the composition; and but for the chiselled symbol, many tombstones from catacombs might have answered for the Pagan dead. Ideas distinguishingly Christian appear indeed in many tributes to virtue or piety, where we recognize an informing principle foreign to all heathen panegyric, e. g.: « *In simplicitate vixit; amicus pauperum, innocentium misericors; spectabilis et penitens* ». And there is touching significance in the use of the term « *natus* » referring to the day of baptism; of « *puer* », often applied to persons of quite mature age, but youthful in the life of faith. Names also gradually indicate the novel direction of mind — as those met with in the fourth century: Adeodatus, Redemptus, Decentia. « *Maria* », following the name Livia, occurs first in the year 381, and again do we find the former repeated twice between 536—538; but remembering how that sweet name

has since, in most natural Christian preference, been given in many countries to males as well as females, must we not here perceive a tacit evidence — slight in itself, but significant in association with other clearer tokens — to dissent, inferable in such comparative neglect, from those absorbing devotional regards *now* encouraged towards her the most blessed of women ever so called upon earth!

It would perhaps be scarce possible for any mind so to cast aside bias and prepossession as to form for itself the ideal of a Christian Church founded exclusively upon the records from the past that meet us in catacombs. But I believe the impartial and calmly adopted conviction would assume that in the worship of such a Church all should revolve round a mystic centre of sacramental ordinances, to which teaching and ceremonial should be secondary and auxiliary; that in her discipline should be combined the hierarchic with the democratic, apostolic authority with apostolic equality among the rulers of *this* Israel, popular co-operation with deference to sacred prescription; that her ritual should be such as to correspond to the demands of our aesthetic nature, to admit all the beautiful that may serve as index or foreshadowing of the True, to be a noble presentment to the eye as well as appeal to the heart and mind; and that her doctrine, worthily embodied in her rites, should, above all, direct religious regards to our one Mediator and perfect Intercessor, without rejecting the idea of saints who for ever adore, and the incense of whose prayer may ascend for the whole company of believers in that invisible world where we have no authority for devotional address to them in our supplications; — should especially centre all hope as well as faith upon Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, our absolute dependence upon Whom seems the great leading lesson conveyed by this aggregate of Christian Monuments (1).

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(1) Originally published in the *Ecclesiologist*.



## APPENDIX

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### SUPPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

ON the 49th of June '66, the Bill for the total suppression of monasteries and convents was passed by the Chamber of Deputies, at Florence, after long debate; 479 voting for, 45 against it. According to its provisions the cloistral buildings are to be appropriated as schools, hospitals, poor-houses, or infant asylums; but if not so utilized within a year, to be aggregated to the property forming the fund for expenses of public worship, the *cassa ecclesiastica*; the members of the several communities to be pensioned at rates varying, according to age and station, between 96 and 600 francs per annum. In the course of the debate exemption was proposed, but in vain, for the Tuscan Camaldoli, and for the entire orders of Hospitallers, founded by St. John Calabita, and sisters of Charity; yet, strange to say, not one voice arose to assert the claims, deserving respect by so many titles from the past, of Monte Cassino, Val-lombrosa, La Cava, Monreale. The Sicilian deputies were strongest in opposition, and with particular reference to the conditions of that island, where the suppression, they represented, would be unpopular and prejudicial. The first article of this law, gazetted with

the royal signature, under date 7th July '66, is as follows: — « Religious orders, corporations, and congregations, regular or secular, as also conservatories and asylums which maintain the community-life, and have the ecclesiastical character, are no longer recognised in the State; the houses and establishments pertaining to such orders, corporations ec., are suppressed ». Then follow the terms of the provision made for individuals quitting the cloisters. All the staple property of the suppressed bodies devolves to the State; but places of worship, together with works of art, vestments, and sacred furniture therein contained, will be left to be applied to the same uses as formerly. Books, MSS., scientific documents, archives, all objects valuable for artistic or antiquarian character, not pertaining to their churches, will be transferred to the public libraries or museums in the several provinces by decree of the Ministry of Worship in accord with that of Public Instruction. A clause, humane in purport, allows such females as so desire to spend the remainder of life in their cloisters, provided they apply for express permission; and those who have brought dowries into the cloister to receive pensions at 6 to 28 per cent, according to age, upon the capital paid in by them. Another clause that refers to renowned establishments in whose fate interest may be felt, and has lately been expressed, in distant countries, is as follows: « Government will provide for preservation of the edifices, with their premises, libraries, archives, objects of art, scientific and all similar instruments, of the Monte Cassino Abbey, of La Cava, of San Martino della Scala, of Monreale, and the Certosa near Pavia; also of other similar ecclesiastical establishments distinguished for monumental importance or for any aggregate of artistic and literary wealth ». For the rest, the vacated buildings will be conceded to the magistracies of the several provinces, if demand be made before the end of a year, to be appropriated as above particularized; those premises already destined for the care of the infirm, or for public tuition, to be as-

signed to the communes in whose territories they stand. Under these enactments, therefore, will a much honoured ancient system, with its venerable institutions of piety and charity, so many of which had birth in this land, be swept away throughout the Italian kingdom before the end of the year 1866 !

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### THE IRON CROWN OF ITALY.

THIS object, with all the others in the sacred treasury of Monza, was recovered by the chapter of the basilica in 1344, after having been long in possession of the Popes at Avignon ; and the archbishop of Milan afterwards engaged a sculptor, Braccioforte of Piacenza, to restore these precious things, many of which had been broken or otherwise injured ( See Tiraboschi ). The restitution of the Crown has been stipulated in the negotiations for peace between Italy and Austria subsequent to the late war.

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### CANONIZATION.

MODERN historians agree in concluding that the first regular canonization by a Pope was not that of Swidbert, as Baronius narrates, but that of Ulrich, Archbishop of Augsburg, so honoured by Pope John XV, in January 993 ; and it was through effect of this act on the part of the Roman Pontiff that individuals were proposed to the *cultus* of the whole Church, instead of, as in earlier cases, after like sentence from other prelates, to honours limited within a single diocese.

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# INDEX

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- Abbots and Abbesses, 283.  
 — of Monte Cassino, 296, 536.  
 Achiropiton, or miraculous image, 462.  
 Adrian I, Pope, 474.  
 — II, 536.  
 Agapae, 44, 462.  
 Agapitus (P.), 235.  
 Agathon (P.), 403.  
 Agriculture, promoted by monks, 286.  
 — on the Roman Campagna, 479.  
 Alaric at Rome, 479.  
 Alboin, king of the Longobards, 413.  
 Alexander I (S. P.), 20.  
 Altar of Victory, 406.  
 Altars, in ancient churches, 35, 433, 564.  
 Ambrogio (S.), basilica, Milan, 556.  
 Ambrose (S.), 407, 442, 470.  
 Anastasius, his biography of Popes, 515.  
 Anglo Saxons, their conversion, 326.  
 Antipopes, 450, 492, 497, 234, 403, 468.  
 Apollinaris (S.), 342.  
 Apollinare (S.), basilica, Ravenna, 349.  
 — Nuovo, Ravenna, 369.  
 Aqueducts, restored by Popes, 478.  
 Arator, his poetry, 237.  
 Arch of Constantine, 86.  
 Archbishops of Ravenna, 345, 402, 542.  
 — of Milan, 555.  
 Archiepiscopal Palace, Ravenna, 360.  
 Architecture of ancient Basilicas, 428, 434, 249.  
 — of Longobards, 420.  
 — of Carlovingian period, 420, 564.  
 — of Northern Italy, 557.  
 Astolphus, king of Longobards, 461.  
 Asylum, privilege of, 442, 393.  
 Attila in Italy, 482.  
 Augustine (S.), his « City of God », 488.  
 Augustulus, last Emperor of the West, 485.

- Baptism, ritual of, 464.  
 Baptistry of Lateran, 242.  
 — of Ravenna, 355, 365.  
 — of Florence, 423.  
 — of Bologna, 492.  
 Basilian Order, 272.  
 Belisarius at Rome, 236, 239.  
 Bells in churches, 496, 275.  
 Benedict I (P.), 253.  
 Benedict III (P.), 508.  
 Benedict (S.), 496.  
 — his figure in Art, 301.  
 Bible, the Latin Vulgate, 451.  
 Bishops of primitive Church, 439.  
 Boetius, his writings and death, 260.  
 Boniface I (S. P.), 492.  
 — III, 392.  
 — IV, 384.  
 — V, 393.  
 Bulgarians, converted by a picture, 544.  
 Cajus (S. P.), 48.  
 Canonization, 529, 589.  
 Callixtus I (S. P.), 21.  
 Cardinals, the Sacred College, 44, 46, 496, 530.  
 Cassiodorus, his writings, 259.  
 Catacombs of Rome, 47, 256, 570.  
 — sepulture in, 452.  
 — restored in VI century, 233, 256.  
 — despoiled by Longobards, 449.  
 — of Naples and Syracuse, 77, 560.  
 Catholic Church, established by law, 444.  
 Celibacy, 21, 93, 454, 581.  
 Chapel of St. Peter Chrysologus, Ravenna, 379.  
 — S. Maria ad Praesepe, in St. Peter's, 435.  
 — of the Holy Column, 544.  
 Charities of the Church, 472, 494, 232, 284, 559.  
 — of Popes, 345, 466, 479, 544.  
 Charlemagne at Rome, 473, 477, 484.  
 Charlemagne, his successors, 531, 553.  
 Clement I (S. P.), 47.  
 Coins of Popes, 487, 499.  
 Column of Phocas, 378.  
 Conclave, 45, 46.  
 Confession, 463, 527, 528.  
 Constans II, at Rome, 400.  
 Constantine, the Great, his conversion, 87.  
 — his victory over Maxentius, 88.  
 — his edict of toleration, 91.  
 — transfers the seat of Empire, 404.  
 Constantine, Pope, 446.  
 — Antipope, 460.  
 Constantius, Emperor, at Rome, 402.  
 Consuls of Rome, 444.  
 Consulate, abolition of, 45, 255.  
 Coronation of Emperors by Popes, 234, 507, 522, 552.  
 — of Charlemagne, 484.  
 — of Alfred the Great, 507.  
 — of Popes, 545.  
 — of Images, 560.  
 Costume, laic, 302, 547.  
 Council of Ephesus, 41, 493.  
 — of Carthage, 200.  
 — in Trullo, 394.  
 — of Ravenna, 526.  
 Councils of Nicaea, 444, 453, 479.  
 — painted in churches, 442.  
 Cornelius (S. P.), 22.  
 Cross, the True, discovery of, 99.  
 — recovered by Heraclius, 405.  
 Crown the Iron, of Italy, 426, 589.  
 — of Agilulph, 429.  
 Croziers, 460.  
 Crucifix, introduced in worship and Art, 531.  
 — caricatured by Pagans, 27.  
 Curia, or Pontific Court, 394, 444.

- Dalmatic at St. Peter's for coronations, 551.  
 Damasus (S. P.), 450.  
 Decretals of Isidore, 514.  
 Desiderius, king of Longobards, 466.  
 Dialogues of S. Gregory, 324, 430.  
 Diptych of Agiltruda, 534.  
 Discipline of primitive Church, 432, 581.  
 — in VII century, 431.  
 — in IX century, 527, 550.  
 Domnus (P.), 401.  
 Donation of Liutprand to the Pope, 454.  
 — of Pepin, 465.  
 — of Charlemagne, 475.  
 — of Louis the Pious, 555.  
 Donations to churches, 98, 434, 499, 232, 429, 501, 504.  
 Dukes of Rome, 443, 447.  
 — of Naples, 519.  
 Ecclesiastical Polity, 439.  
 Election of Popes, 43, 396, 402, 479, 502, 521.  
 — of Bishops, 440, 232, 333, 414.  
 — of Abbots, 296, 536.  
 Elias, represented in Art, 43, 351.  
 Epigraphs, Christian, 45, 68, 425, 580.  
 Eucharist, the Holy Sacrament, represented in Art, 43, 573.  
 — its reservation and celebration, 461, 463.  
 Eugenius I (P.), 399.  
 Eugenius II, 500.  
 Evangelists, their Emblems in Art, 87, 575.  
 Eutychianus (S. P.), 44.  
 Evaristus (S. P.), 20.  
 Exarchate of Ravenna, 249, 343, 462.  
 Excommunication, 470, 472.  
 Felix II (P.), 40, 448.  
 — IV (P.), 234.  
 Festival of SS. Peter and Paul, 4  
 — of S. Cecilia, 72.  
 Festival of Candlemas, 466.  
 — of S. Alexander, 218.  
 — of All Saints, 384.  
 — of Pentecost, 385.  
 Fleet, the Pontific, 518.  
 Formosus (P.), 521.  
 Forum of Trajan, 402, 456.  
 Funerals, 464.  
 Galerius, his edict in favour of Christians, 426.  
 Galla Placidia, her character, 356.  
 Gates of Rome, restored by Belisarius, 248.  
 Gelasius I (S. P.), 495.  
 Gladiators, their combats prohibited, 445, 449.  
 Gospels, the apocryphal, 468.  
 Gregory (S.) of Tours, his writings, 265.  
 Gregory I (S. P.), the Great, 310, 388, 391.  
 — II, 448.  
 — III, 448, 456.  
 — IV, 501.  
 Heretics, their punishment, 444.  
 Hermits, 468.  
 Holy Week, 498, 313.  
 Honorius Emperor, at Rome, 443.  
 Honorius I, (P.), 393.  
 Hormisdas, (P.), 233.  
 Hymns, 470, 323, 565.  
 Iconoclast Schism, 447.  
 — suppression of 527.  
 Images, honour paid to them, 389, 453, 531.  
 — of the Blessed Virgin, 318, 36, 40, 453.  
 Innocent I (S. P.), 491.  
 Invasions of Italy, 476, 484, 486, 249, 254, 413.  
 Joannes Diaconus his writings, 565.  
 Joan, the fabulous *Papessa*, 508.  
 John (S.) the Evangelist, basilica, Ravenna, 360.  
 John (S. P.) I, 234.  
 — III, 253.  
 — IV, 399.

- John (S. P.) VI, 446.  
 — VII, 435, 446.  
 — VIII, 516.  
 — IX 525.  
 Julian the Apostate, 404.  
 Julius I, (S. P.), 446.  
 Justinian, his character, 369.  
 Juvenecus, his poetry, 469.
- Keys and Banner, presented by  
 Popes to Princes, 437.  
 Kings of Italy, 479.
- Labarum, the sacred standard, 89.  
 Largesses to populace in Rome,  
 475.  
 Lateran Palace, 94, 520.  
 — Triclinium 437.  
 Laws of Christian Emperors, 91,  
 92, 104, 409, 485.  
 — of Longobards, 420.  
 Legends of S. Peter, 6.  
 — of S. Cecilia, 7, 548.  
 — of S. Agnes, 7.  
 — of S. Clement, 47.  
 — of the death of Julian,  
 405.  
 — of the Liberian Basilica  
 (S. Maria Maggiore), 449.  
 — of S. Sylvester, 455.  
 — of Constantine, 457.  
 — of the Nicene Council,  
 459.  
 — of S. Paulinus, 492.  
 — of the Blessed Virgin,  
 468 203, 224, 266.  
 — of the punishment of  
 Theodoric, 263, 324.  
 — of the Seven Sleepers,  
 263.  
 — of SS. Cosmo and Da-  
 mian, 264.  
 — of the Relics of S. Ste-  
 phen, 264.  
 — of the Castle of S. An-  
 gelo, 317.  
 — of the salvation of Tra-  
 jan, 325.  
 — of the banquet of Saint  
 Gregory, 336.  
 — of the portraits of the  
 SAVIOUR, 345, 453, 462.
- Legends of S. John and Galla Pla-  
 cidia, 358.  
 — of the Salvation of Dago-  
 bert, 444.  
 — of the Destroying Angel  
 at Rome, 408.  
 — of the Holy Column, 544.  
 — of S. Antoninus of Sor-  
 rento, 560.  
 Leo V, the Iconoclast Emperor,  
 447.  
 Leo I (S. P.), the Great, 484.  
 — II, 402.  
 — III, 479.  
 — IV 504.  
 Leonine City, 504.  
 Libraries in Italy, 291, 401, 864.  
 Lights in churches, 460, 198, 388.  
 Literature in the IV century, 467.  
 — in the V century, 257.  
 — in the VI century, 257.  
 — in the VII century, 444.  
 — in the VIII and IX  
 centuries, 565.  
 Liturgies, the ancient, 461, 333.  
 — the Ambrosian, 459, 556.  
 Longobards, invade Italy. 294.  
 — fall of their kingdom  
 477.  
 Lucca, churches, 492.  
 Lupercal-, Pagan festival of, 420.
- Mamertine Prisons, 6.  
 Marcellinus (S. P.), 442.  
 Marcus Aurelius, 33.  
 Martin I (S. P.), 397.  
 Martin S.) of Tours, 270  
 Martyr of the Colosseum, 445.  
 Martyrs, their numbers, 25, 75.  
 Mary, the Blessed Virgin, in  
 primitive art, 44, 204.  
 — her worship established,  
 122, 202, 353.  
 Mass, its composition and author-  
 ship, 459 388.  
 — frequency of celebrations,  
 462, 529.  
 — celebrated by the Pope. 488  
 Mausoleum of Constantia, 83.  
 — of S. Helena, 84.  
 — of Hadrian, 230, 237.  
 — of Galla Placidia, 257.



- Mausoleum of Theodoric, 366.  
 — of Romulus (so-called) 440.  
 Metallurgy, 375, 558.  
 Milan, destroyed in the VI century, 238; its churches, 556.  
 Mitres, 457, 482.  
 Monastic Orders, 269.  
 — represented in Art, 303  
 — decline and restoration of, 436.  
 — suppression of, 299 587.  
 Monasteries, the primitive, 273.  
 — their construction and plan, 287.  
 Monte Cassino, 276 536.  
 Monza, Basilica of S. John, 426.  
 Mosaics, Christian, 83, 95, 489, 206, 353, 355, 357, 360, 367, 376, 380, 434, 440, 494, 542.  
 Music in churches, 460, 406.  
 Naples, siege of by Totila, 240.  
 — churches of in the IX century, 559.  
 Narses at Rome, 247.  
 Nicholas I (S. P.), 510.  
 Nimbus, in Christian Art, 54.  
 Nonantola, monastery, 491.  
 Novalesse, monastery, 537,  
 Obelisk before the Lateran, 424  
 Oracles, 426  
 Ordeals, 530.  
 Ostrogothic invasion of Italy, 487.  
 — kingdom founded, 363.  
 Paganism, in the IV century, 448.  
 — in the V century, 476, 478.  
 — in the VI century, 379  
 — suppression of, 404, 408, 444, 444, 423.  
 Paintings, the early Christian, 64, 548.  
 Pallium conferred by Popes, 234  
 Palatine, 443.  
 Pantheon, 584, 400, 443.  
 Patriciate of Rome, 250, 553.  
 Papacy, in primitive ages, 16, 582.  
 — its primacy, 436, 330, 513.  
 Papacy, its temporal power, 451, 459, 465 498.  
 — its titles, 437, 509.  
 Papal Benediction, 49.  
 Paschal I (S. P.), 499.  
 Paul (S.), represented in Art, 65, 458.  
 Paul I (S. P.), 466.  
 Paulinus (S.) his writings, 472.  
 Paulus Diaconus, his writings, 495.  
 Pavia, taken by Charlemagne, 477.  
 — churches of, 494.  
 Pelagius I (P.), 252.  
 — II, 254.  
 Pepin, king of France, 461.  
 Perugia, siege of, 460.  
 Peter (S.) at Rome, 43.  
 — represented in Art, 65, 458.  
 — his sepulchre, 7, 74, 97  
 Peter and Paul, (SS.) in Art, 457, 576.  
 Pilgrimages, 526.  
 Poets, the early Christian, 468.  
 Pontifex Maximus, title of, 408.  
 Prayer for the Dead, 583.  
 Prudentius, his poems, 474.  
 Ratchis, the king and monk, 460.  
 Ravenna, 343, 512.  
 Relics, 264, 390, 527, 467.  
 — of the Cross, 465.  
 — of S. Peter's Chains, 219, 266, 324  
 — of S. Gregory, 320, 335.  
 — at Monza, 429.  
 Ritual and Worship of primitive Church, 28, 460.  
 — in the IV century, 459.  
 — in the VI century, 206.  
 — in the VII century, 333, 405.  
 — In the IX century, 527, 528.  
 Romagna, 445.  
 Roman Government under Greek Empire, 441.  
 — under the Frankish Emperors, 486.  
 Rome, churches:  
 S. Adriano, 382.  
 S. Agnese, Nomentan Way 382

## Rome, churches :

- S. Alessandro, Nomentan Way, 244.
- SS. Apostoli, 253
- S. Benedetto in Piscinula, 294.
- S. Callisto, 44.
- S. Cecilia, 7, 547.
- S. Clemente, 47, 444.
- SS. Cosmo e Damiano, 40, 226.
- S. Costanza, Nomentan Way, 83.
- S. Croce in Gerusalemme, 81, 99.
- Domine quo vadis, Appian Way, 6.
- SS. Giovanni e Paolo, 82.
- S. Gregorio, 335.
- Lateran Basilica, 94.
- S. Lorenzo, Tiburtine Way, 228, 255, 535.
- S. Lorenzo in Damaso, 452.
- S. Marcello, 442.
- S. Marco, 549.
- S. Maria in Cosmedin, 8.
- S. Maria in Domnica, 546.
- S. Maria Maggiore, 449, 494, 206.
- S. Maria Nuova 550.
- S. Maria in Trastevere, 21.
- S. Maria in Trivio 235.
- S. Maria in Via Lata, 5.
- SS. Martino e Silvestro, 87.
- S. Michele in Sassia, 539.
- SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, 440.
- S. Pancrazio, 253, 522.
- S. Paul's, Ostian Way, 97, 429, 209.
- S. Peter's, 96, 428, 503.
- S. Pietro in Montorio, 4.
- S. Pietro in Vinculis 249.
- S. Pudenziana, 34, 494.
- S. Prassede, 540.
- S. Prisca, 44.
- SS. Quattro Coronati, 382, 539.
- S. Sabina, 208.
- S. Salvatore in Torrone, 442.
- S. Silvestro in Capite, 468.
- S. Stefano Rotondo, 224.
- S. Stefano, Latin Way, 213.
- S. Teodoro, 386, 444.
- S. Urbano, 42, 533.

## Rome, churches :

- S. Venanzio, 379.
- SS. Vincenzo ed Anastasio (alle tre Fontane), 2, 386.
- Rome in the V century, 474.
- Rosmunda, Queen of the Longobards, 444.
- Sabinianus (P.), 391.
- Saints, veneration of, 466, 537, 560.
- Salvianus, his writings, 223.
- Saracens at Rome, 503.
- Sarcophagi of S. Helena and Constantia, 85.
- Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, 60.
- Saviour of the World, represented in Art, 40, 42, 209, 345, 434, 462, 552.
- Scala Santa, 400.
- Schism of Greek Church, 510
- Schools, public, 479, 534.
- Sculpture, the early Christian, 60, 63, 242, 375, 427.
- Sebastian (S.), his martyrdom and figure in Art, 401.
- Senate of Rome, 444, 475.
- Sepulture of Popes, 385, 406.
- Serena and the Vestal, 447.
- Sergius I (P.), 403.
- II 502.
- Shrine of S. Ambrose, 558.
- of S. Augustine, 449.
- Sibylline Books, 421.
- Sieges of Rome by Alaric, 447 479.
- by Genseric, 483.
- by Ricimir, 485.
- by Vitiges, 236.
- by Totila, 241.
- by the Longobards, 254 320, 446.
- by Astolphus, 464.
- by Arnulph, 522.
- Sixtus I (S. P.), 20.
- II 23, 48.
- III 494.
- Slavery, 92, 475.
- Soracte, monastery, 491.
- Stations, 17, 314.
- Statue of St. Peter, 242, 577.
- Statues of Christian Emperors, 85, 90.

Stefano (S.), church, Bologna, 492

Stephen I (P.), 23.

— II and III, 464.

— IV, 468.

— V, 498.

— VI, 520

— VII, 524.

Stilicho, his death, 448.

Stylites, or Pillar Saints, 200.

Subiaco, 294.

Sunday, observance of, 92, 467, 495.

Symbolic Animals in Art, 42, 421, 425, 578, 580.

Symbolism of Monastic Orders and Founders, 303.

Symbols of SS. Peter and Paul, 576-7.

— of primitives Popes, 30

Symmachus (P.), 497.

Symmachus, defender of Paganism, 407.

Synesius, his poems, 470.

Temple of Cybele, 447.

— of Jupiter Capitolinus, 448.

— of Æsculapius, 449.

— of Janus, 449, 242.

— of Venus and Rome, 384

Temples, their classification, 430

Theodolinda, Queen of Longobards, 446, 430

Theodora, Empress, her character, 374.

Theodore (P.), 395.

Theodoric, king of Ostrogoths, 487, 230.

Theodosius, sole Emperor, 408.

— his public penance, 441.

Thermae of Rome, deserted, 237.

Torture, prohibited by Pope Nicholas I, 530.

Totila at Rome, 244, 247.

— his meeting with S. Benedict, 277.

Towers of churches in Rome, 539.

Treasury, Papal, despoiled, 396.

TRINITY, the Divine Persons, represented in Art, 61, 446.

Urban I (S. P.), 42.

Verona, cathedral, 561.

Vestments, ecclesiastical, 68, 460 267, 302, 430, 550.

Vexillum, the sacred banner, 439.

Vicariales of Italy, 439.

Vicovaro, convent, 292.

Vigilius (P.), 250.

Vision of the Cross to Constantine, 88.

— of the SAVIOUR, 6, 95.

— of the Blessed Virgin, 249.

— of S. Michael the Archangel, 202, 347, 337.

— of S. Apollinaris, 351.

— of S. John the Evangelist, 358.

— of S. John the Baptist, 449.

— of S. Gregory, 392.

Visits « ad limina Apostolorum », 49.

Vitale (S.), basilica, Ravenna, 370

Vitalianus (P.), 400.

Walls of Rome, 236, 245.

Wells, sacred, in churches, 40.

Zacharias (P.), 458.

Zenone (S.), basilica, Verona, 561

Zosimus (P.), 496.

## E R R A T A

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<i>Page</i>	24	<i>for</i>	A. D. 298	<i>read</i>	303
»	58 (l. 30)	»	reflects	»	reflect
»	74 (l. 46)			<i>dele</i>	al
»	85	»	A. D. 4195	<i>read</i>	4135
»	403 (l. 26)	»	effected	»	affected
»	446 (note)	»	bishop	»	priest
»	459 (l. 20)	»	been	»	seen
»	483 (note)	»	X century	»	IX ec.
»	205 (note)	»	ascent	»	ascents
»	234 (l. 43)	»	wanted	»	wanting
»	243 (l. 30)	»	Ostian gate	»	Asinarian ec.
»	252	»	A. D. 355	»	555
»	255	»	A. D. 644	»	544
»	276 (l. 9)	»	prices	»	pieces
»	297	»	Victor II	»	Victor III
»	344 (l. 43)	»	diaconal	»	subdiaconal
»	386 (l. 47)	»	is	»	so
»	402 (l. 40)			<i>dele</i>	to
»	428 (l. 48)	»	lamina	<i>read</i>	laminae
»	442	»	Stephen II	»	Stephen III
»	448	»	A. D. 634	»	734
»	504 (l. 44)	»	even	»	ever
»	520	»	Stephen V	»	Stephen VI
»	530 (l. 3)	»	Pointoise	»	Pontoise

**NB.** In note to page 445, add, after enumeration of cities, « all (except Ancona) ».

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